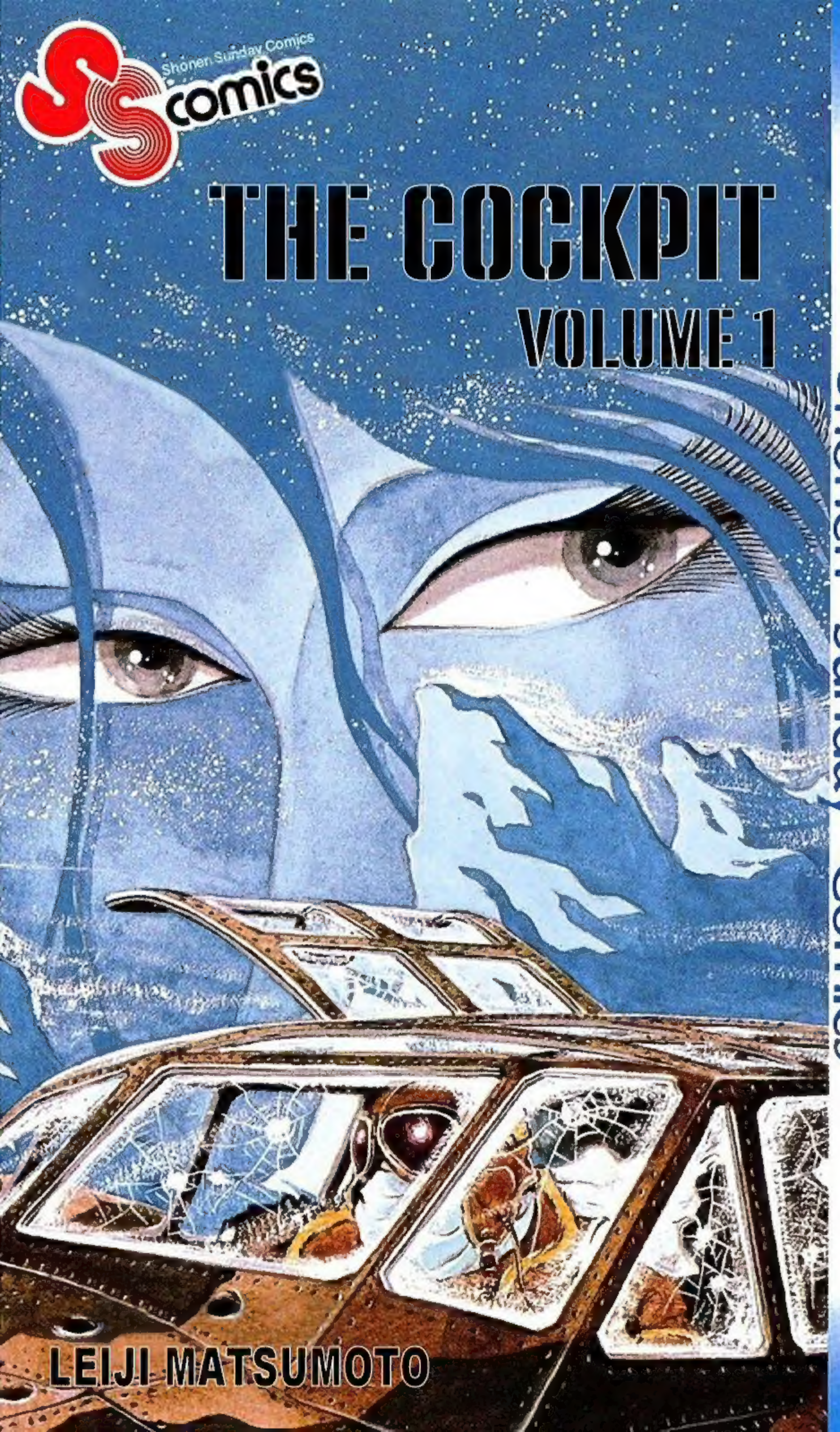
Shonen Sunday Comics

# THE COCKPIT

## VOLUME 1



LEIJI MATSUMOTO

Shonen Sunday Comics

# NOTICE!

Japanese comics or *manga* are read from right to left across the page instead of left to right. Also, if your reader supports Japanese *manga* format (back to front instead of front to back) then set it so for easier reading. Thanks!

# THE COCKPIT
## VOLUME 1

# THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH
## AND OTHER STORIES

松本零士

BY/L·MATSUMOTO

# EDITOR'S NOTE

This manga was "scanlated" from the original Japanese by feeding the individual pages through the free Google Translate AI program and then the results cleaned up considerably for better reading by English speaking audiences. Google Translate AI is a far from perfect tool as I write this (2026) but as I said it was free and you can't beat that with a stick. The end results were barely readable and I've had to both rewrite and interpolate considerably in places in order to produce an English adaptation that reads well.

My apologies to all of you who know the language. All I can say is that the rest of us have waited this long for some kind (*any* kind) of English language adaptation of this classic Leiji Matsumoto manga. If you can and are willing to do better then by all means feel free to do so. I won't be offended. I'll enjoy your effort with everyone else who reads it. (R.M.)

# THE COCKPIT (aka BATTLEFIELD) Volume 1: The Owen Stanley Witch and other stories

by Leiji Matsumoto

A Google Translate ® adaptation

English language cleanup
by Richard Mandel

Released in 2026 by fans for fans
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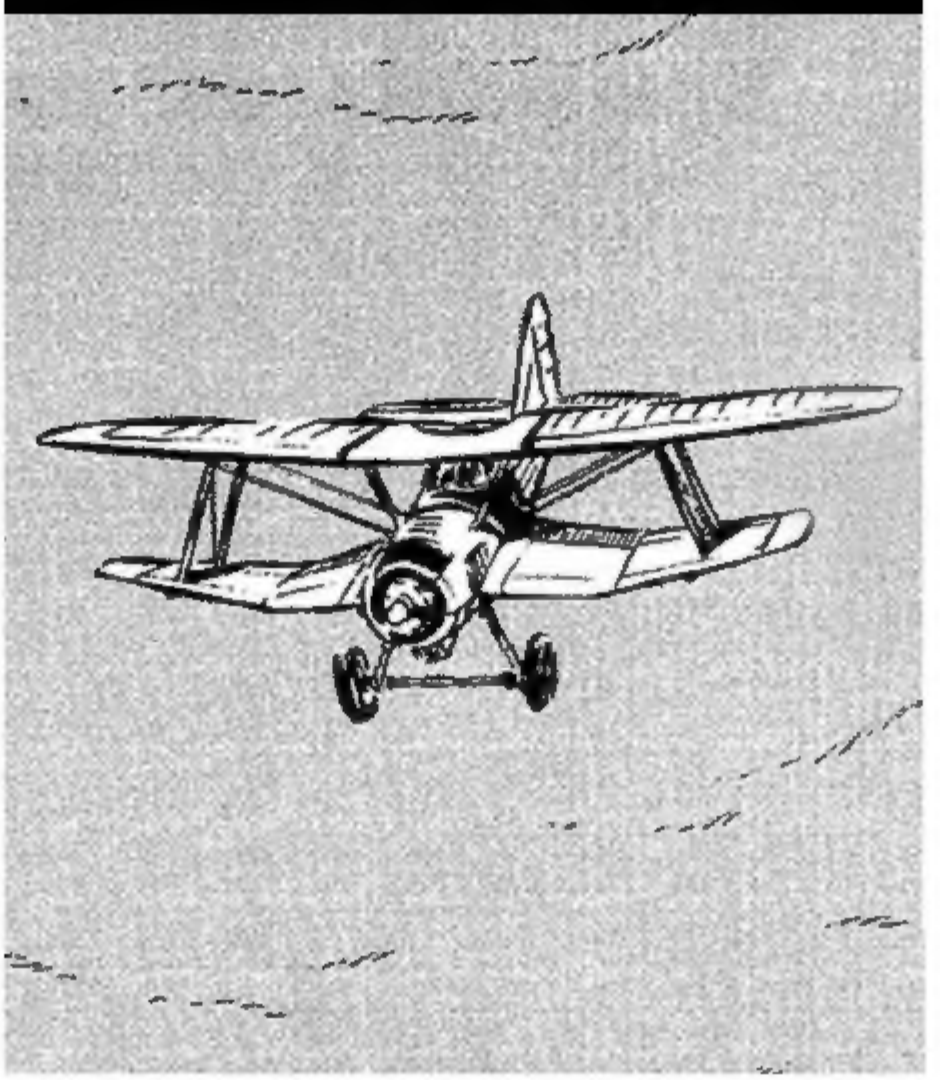
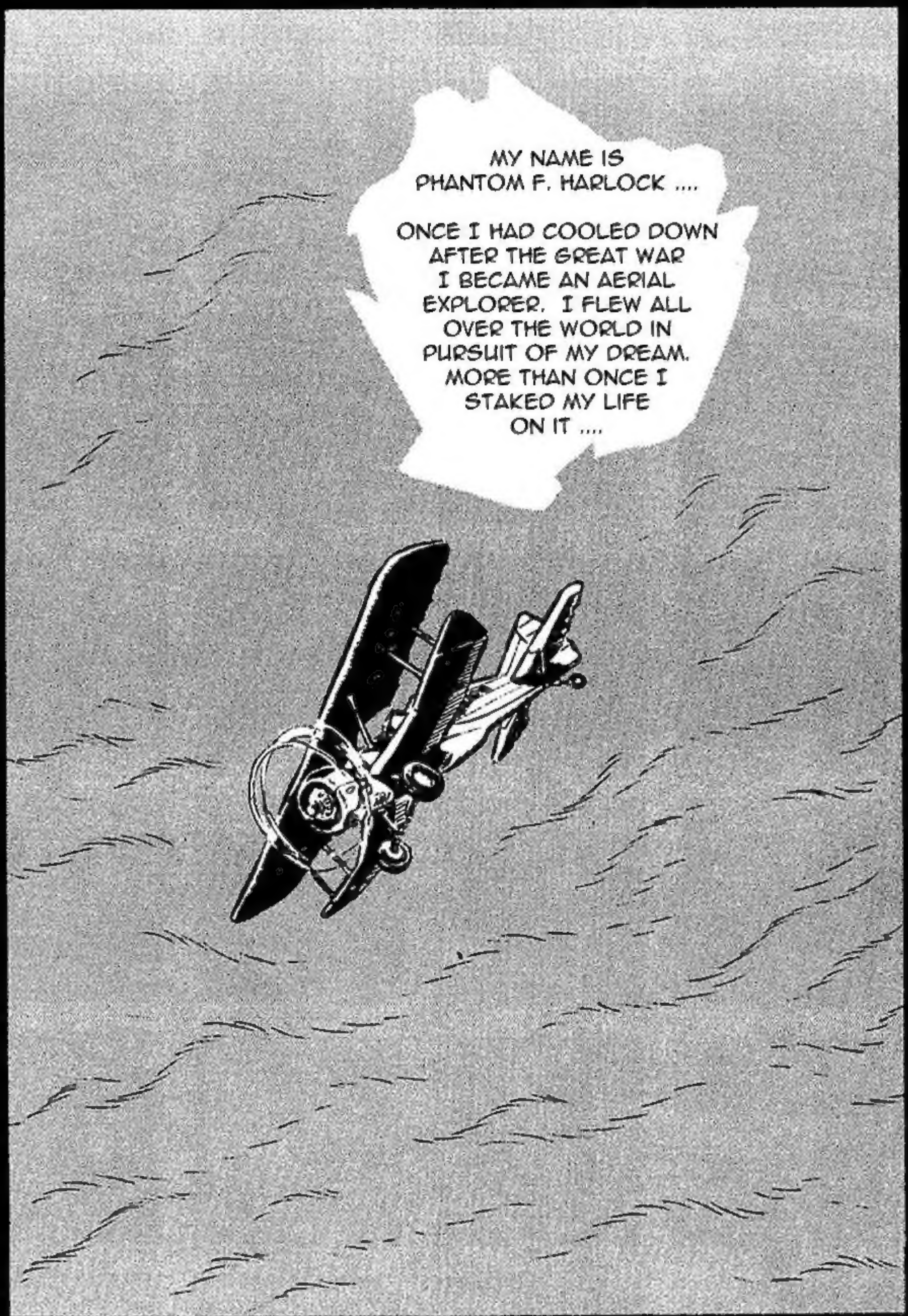
■松本零士■
LEIJI MATSUMOTO

# These are stories of men, women, and the machines of war.

TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

# THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH




MY NAME IS PHANTOM F. HARLOCK ....
ONCE I HAD COOLED DOWN AFTER THE GREAT WAR I BECAME AN AERIAL EXPLORER. I FLEW ALL OVER THE WORLD IN PURSUIT OF MY DREAM. MORE THAN ONCE I STAKED MY LIFE ON IT ....

I WAS ALONE. ALL TIES OF BLOOD, FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND SOCIETY I HAD LEFT BEHIND. IT WAS JUST ME AND MY PLANE NOW.

MY PLANE ... MY BLOOD BROTHER IN THE SKY ....

WE FACED BOTH LIFE AND DEATH TOGETHER BACK THEN.

THERE CAME A DAY WHEN I WAS FLYING FROM PORT MORESBY IN AUSTRALIA TO RABAUL ON NEW BRITAIN. THAT'S WHEN I MET HER ....

ON THAT DAY I HAD A FULL LOAD OF FUEL FOR THE LONG TRIP. IT MADE MY PLANE HEAVY AND SLUGGISH.

THOSE TWO FACTORS WORKED AGAINST ME AS I SOUGHT TO FLY OVER THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS AND MAKE RABAUL.

... BUT IT WAS NO USE. THERE WAS NO OPENING TO BE FOUND.

THE MOUNTAINS WERE HIGH AND COLD. THEY LOOMED OVER ME AS I STRUGGLED TO TURN "ARCADIA" BACK THE WAY I HAD COME. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I FACED DEFEAT.

MY PLANE "ARCADIA" AND I SOUGHT SOME PASS OR OTHER OPENING TO SAFELY MAKE THE TRIP ...

# THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH

THAT'S WHEN I SAW HER ... THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH.

SHE WAS LAUGHING! LAUGHING AT ME! *ME!!*

ARCADIA

NO! I WOULD NOT BE DEFEATED! I TURNED BACK AND DUMPED ALL BUT WHAT I JUDGED ENOUGH TO CLEAR THE MOUNTAIN AND FIND A SPOT TO LAND ON THE THE OTHER SIDE. WITH "ARCADIA" NOW FAR LIGHTER AND FASTER THAN BEFORE I BEGAN TO CLIMB. UP, UP, AND HIGHER STILL, WHILE SHE STILL LAUGHED AT ME ....

MY NAME IS PHANTOM F. HARLOCK. I DUELED THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH ON THAT FATEFUL DAY ... AND I WON.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU READ THAT DAMN BOOK?

PHANTOM F. HARLOCK. NOW THERE WAS A MAN'S MAN!

WHAT MAKES AN OLD BOOK LIKE THAT SO GREAT?

AT LEAST 300. WHY?

YOU KNOW WE'LL MEET HER SOON ....

I'M A REAL MAN AND I DON'T GET IT.

HOW DO I SAY THIS? IT'S A BOOK ONLY REAL MEN CAN GET.

I WONDER WHY THEY KEEP DOING THAT? LIEUTENANT?

SNORT!

AND THEY LEFT US BEHIND AGAIN. I'M PROPERLY GRATEFUL.

THOSE GUYS WILL MEET HER BEFORE WE DO, IF SHE EXISTS. THEY'VE BEEN SENT OFF TO BOMB PORT MORESBY.

YOU'RE RIGHT, I SHOULD KNOW! I SAY THEY'RE SAVING US FOR OUR PLANE UNTIL THEY NEED IT, THEN THEY'LL TAKE US OFF AND GIVE HER ANOTHER CREW INSTEAD!

YEAH, SURE.

YOU WOULD KNOW, WOULDN'T YOU, ADACHI?

BECAUSE WE'RE INCOMPETENT AND LAZY, THAT'S WHY! TRUST ME!

UNHHH!!! AAAHH ....

BOMB-- OH YEAH!

BOMBING PRACTICE!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I WONDER IF THE AUSTRALIANS WILL BOMB US.

SO MUCH TO DO, SO MUCH TIME TO WASTE! *SKNZXX ...*

ENDURANCE TRAINING, MISTER PETTY OFFICER! I'M SEEING HOW LONG I CAN SLEEP!

WHY ARE YOU LYING DOWN?

I SAY LET THEM WORRY ABOUT IT! THINK I'LL DO SOME ENDURANCE TRANING TOO! *SKNZXX ....*

WHAT, US WORRY? THAT'S A PROBLEM FOR THE FIGHTER JOCKS!

PHANTOM F HARLOCK

YEAH, AND THEY SENT US ONLY FOUR BOMBERS AND ONE FIGHTER TO COVER FOR ALL OF OUR LOSSES.

WE'VE LOST A LOT OF PLANES ON THESE RAIDS.

SSSHH! DON'T LET THEM HEAR YOU! THEY'LL SAY IT'S OUR FAULT AND DO SOMETHING TO US!

OURS WAS THE ONLY BOMBER NOT DAMAGED IN SOME WAY.'.

YEAH. MOWED DOWN THOSE PARKED PLANES LIKE TEN PINS.

!!!

MOST OF THE FIGHTERS WE LOST WHEN THEY DID THAT SURPRISE RAID ON US.

SAY, GUYS? IT'S BEEN THREE HOURS. I WONDER HOW THE OTHERS ARE DOING OVER MORESBY ....

*SKNZXX!!* NO WAY. YOU GET THAT LOW WE'LL HIT THE WAVES AND CRASH! AHM ... MM ... HM .....

HEY, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! IF THEY DO SEND US OUT, LET'S TRY HIGH SPEED FISHING WHILE WE'RE OVER THE OCEAN!

JUST REMEMBER WE'RE A TEAM, ALL SEVEN OF US, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WAR!

YEAH. I CAN HEAR IT NOW. "INCOMPETENT LOUTS LIKE YOU ARE WHY THE IMPERIAL NAVY IS GOING BANKRUPT!"

CLEAR THE FIELD!! CL--

I DON'T THINK HE CAN.

HOLY SHIT, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT?! HE'S BEEN ALL SHOT UP! GET YOUR OTHER WHEEL DOWN!

DAMN.

BAM! BA-BAM-BAM-BAM-

SSKKKRRRRREEEEEEE ...ood'

WHAM!!!

THEY'VE GOT COCKPIT ARMOR AND THEY'RE FASTER IN A DEAD DIVE, AND THE ALLIES KNOW THAT.

I WAS TOLD OUR RIESEN IS BETTER THAN A P-40!

MORESBY'S GOT ACK-ACK AND P-40S FOR AIR COVER, WHICH ARE NONE TOO SHABBY FOR FIGHTERS.

TAKE A GOOD LOOK, KID. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING INTO IF THEY EVER SEND US OUT.

...BBBRRRRRRNNNNN...

WHERE ARE THE REST?!

THEY DIDN'T MAKE IT.

WE SENT OUT 27 BOMBERS WITH FULL AIR COVER. WE'LL BE LUCKY IF THERE ARE ANY STRAGGLERS.
CH-CH-CHUGGA-CH-CH-CHUGGA-
KAKH! KAKH!
BZZZHHHK!
BZZZHHHK!

SOUND OF AIRCRAFT MOTORS WINDING DOWN MIXED WITH APPROACHING VEHICLE MOTORS AND AMBULANCE SIRENS

... BRRRRNNNNNNNNNN ...

... BRRRRNNNNNNNNN ...

YOU KNOW, ONE OF THESE DAYS THAT FAT FUCKER IS GOING TO FALL OFF OF THAT DAMN BIKE.

OH LOOK! IT'S THE GROUND CHIEF!

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN OBVIOUS.

LOOKS LIKE THEY DID BETTER AT MORESBY THAN DID OUR BOMBERS.

WE'RE GOING TO *WHAT?!*

SADDLE UP BOYS! LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE FINALLY GONNA SEND YOU OUT!

YOU AND YOUR BIG MO-- HEY... DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?!

YEAH .... LOOKS LIKE THEY SCRAPED THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL FOR THIS FLIGHT.

THERE'S TWO HANGAR QUEENS, AND THREE OF THOSE PLANES JUST CAME IN FROM THAT LAST MISSION!

THOSE PLANES SHOULDN'T EVEN BE FLYING!

WELL, YOU KNOW H.Q. HAS A BUG IN ITS BUTT ABOUT MORESBY. I GUESS WE'RE THE NEXT TURDS TO SLING AT IT.

CUT THE CRAP. YOUR EYESIGHT'S NOT *THAT* GOOD.

OOHHH, WHAT'S THAT WAY OUT THERE? A KITE? OR MAYBE EVEN A PIGEON!

HA-HAH, THAT'S VERY GOOD, LIEUTEN-ANT!

HEY, OWARI! HOW'S YOUR LAZY ASS DOING BACK THERE?

EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT, ADACHI! WE CAN DROP OUR FULL LOAD ANYTIME!

ARE WE GOOD FOR BOMBING, KUMADA?

TRY PETROLEUM JELLY, VERY LIGHT. ME, I'M MORE WORRIED ABOUT THEM COMING OFF IN COMBAT.

DO YOU EVER HAVE A PROBLEM WITH YOUR GLASSES FOGGING UP? MY GOGGLES DO IT ALL THE TIME.

HEY, OUR FRIEND NUMBER TWO IS ACTING UP AGAIN!

EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT, SIR, BUT TO BE BRUTALLY HONEST I'VE NEVER HAD TO DROP BOMBS UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS AND FROM THIS KIND OF AIRCRAFT. I'LL STILL DO MY BEST, SIR.

NAGARE-YAMA, ARE YOU GOOD TO DROP BOMBS?

I'LL DO MY BEST, SIR. OH, AND THANK YOU AGAIN FOR LETTING ME FLY. I APPRECIATE YOU GIVING ME THE EXPERIENCE.

IT'S THE OIL PRESSURE. CAN YOU HANDLE IT, SHIKI?

PLEASE, BRITISH! GO ATTACK OWARI AT THE BACK! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

WHICH MEANS MY CANOPY WILL GET SHATTERED AND IF I'M NOT KILLED OUTRIGHT I'LL FALL OUT AND ... !

OHIRA, BE READY TO FIRE AT ALL TIMES! THE PILOTS FROM THE OTHER FLIGHTS TOLD ME THEIR FIGHTERS LOVE TO DO HEAD ON ATTACKS!

WHAT THE HELL?! WE'RE NOT EVEN THERE YET!

BANDITS! BANDITS! BANDITS!

"IT'S NOT THE FALL THAT KILLS YOU BUT THE SUDDEN STOP AT THE END."

TEN EACH, AHEAD OF AND BEHIND US! FLY FASTER, SHIKI! WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!

WHERE? SHOW ME WHERE!

BANDITS, 30 DEGREES ABOVE AND BEHIND!

BESIDES, WE HAVEN'T EVEN REACHED THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS YET, SO HOW COULD WE HAVE ENEMY FIGHTERS BEHIND US, OH WISE ONE?!

BELAY THAT! EVERYONE IGNORE HIM! THOSE ARE OUR OWN FIGHTERS, YOU MORON.

BOSS, WHAT'S WRONG? WE'RE FALLING BEHIND THE REST OF THE FLIGHT!

THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS ... JUST LIKE THE PICTURE IN HIS BOOK!

EVERYBODY BUCKLE DOWN, 'CAUSE THIS IS GONNA BE ROUGH!

NUMBER 2'S ACTING UP AGAIN! MUST BE THE COLD!

CHUGGA-CHUGGA

INCREASE YOUR ALTITUDE, OR YOU'RE GOING TO BE A GREASE SPOT ON THAT MOUNTAIN!

YOU'RE FALLING BEHIND! PICK IT UP!

THERE THEY ARE AND FOR REAL!

WE'RE NOT EVEN THERE YET AND ALREADY THEY'RE ONE PLANE DOWN. *OUR* PLANE.

THERE IT IS! THE LAIR OF THE WITCH HERSELF PER THE BOOK!

GOOD THING WE'RE LATE.

"ENEMY RESISTANCE FIERCE, FULL FIGHTER COVER."

RADIO CALL FROM THE REST OF THE FLIGHT.

HEY! NOTHING HAPPENED! WE'RE ALL RIGHT! SHE LET US GO!

MAYBE WE'RE TOO HIGH FOR HER TO WORRY WITH.

WHAT, ARE WE NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER?

MAYBE ....

YOU TWO! GO FLY COVER FOR OUR LATE ARRIVAL!

OKAY, EVERYONE CAN RELAX NOW UNTIL WE'RE THERE!

WHEW! I DIDN'T THINK WE'D MAKE IT!

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

WOULD YOU LOOK AT ALL THAT ACK-ACK?!

THANKS, GUYS. GLAD WE CAN STILL JOIN THE PARTY.

... *CRACKLE* ... PRIMARY ... *CRACKLE* ... PROCEED ... SEC- *POP TARGET ...

THAT'S THE DOCKS, ISN'T IT?

SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE TELLING US TO HIT THE SECONDARY TARGET SINCE WE CAME LATE.

LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY KICKED OVER A BEEHIVE DOWN THERE! WELL, HERE WE GO!

BANZAI!!!

A LITTLE: MORE ... A LITTLE MORE ...

ALMOST THERE ...

THEY'RE DROPPING THEIR -- BANDITS!! BANDITS!!

SHTONK!

SHTONK!

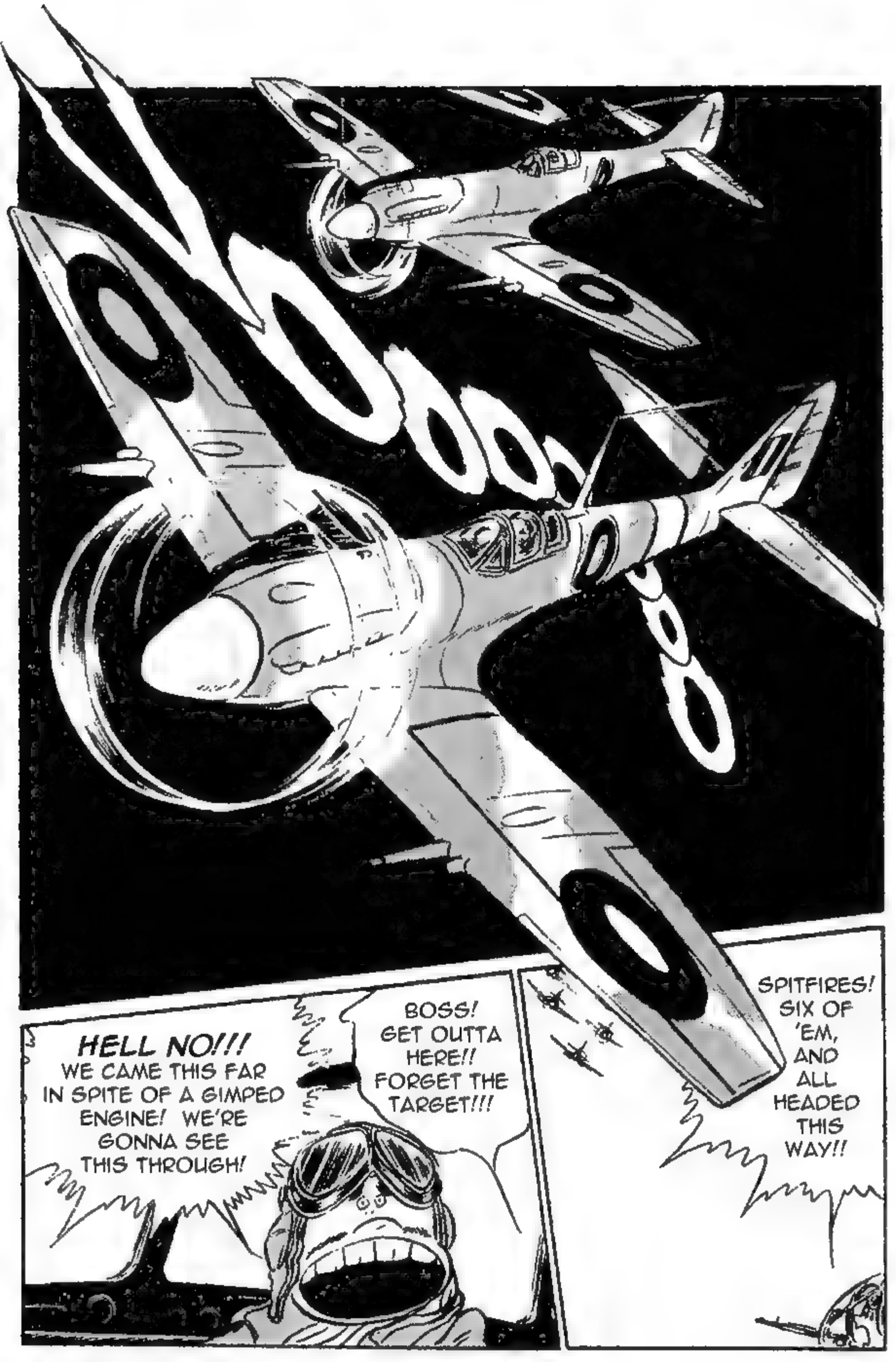
RAAAHHRRRR!!!!

BOSS! I'M READY WHEN YOU ARE! TIME TO--

AH! A HARBOR FULL OF NICE FAT JUICY TARGETS FOR US TO BOMB!



NOTE - DROPPING EXTERNAL FUEL TANKS LIGHTENS THE LOAD AND INCREASES MANEUVERABILITY FOR A FIGHTER


BOSS! GET OUTTA HERE!! FORGET THE TARGET!!!
HELL NO!!! WE CAME THIS FAR IN SPITE OF A GIMPED ENGINE! WE'RE GONNA SEE THIS THROUGH!
SPITFIRES! SIX OF 'EM, AND ALL HEADED THIS WAY!!

BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-
LET THE SMOKE CLEAR ...
HE COVERED US!!!
THUNKA! THUNKA! THUNKA! THUNKA! THUNKA! THUNKA!
FINISH THE JOB!!! BANZAI!!!!!
OH-MI-GAWD.

WHEEEEEEEOOOOOOOO...
NOW!!!
VURRRUUMMMMMM...
LET'S GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE!!!
SHIT!!!
BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA
BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA

THEY GOT NUMBER 2!
AT LEAST IT WASN'T THE GOOD ONE.
SIR, I'M SHUTTING IT DOWN IN CASE OF FIRE.
GOOD CALL.
SHWOO ...
SHWOO ...
SHWOO ...
SHWOO ...
NNGRRRWWW-KAAKA-KAAKA-RR
THUNKA!
THUNKA!
THUNKA!
THUNKA!
BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA-BRADDA

JUST CUTS AND BRUISES. WE'RE FINE.

IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?

OH, YOU SWEET ESCORT! I COULD JUST KISS YOU!

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT BACK OVER THE MOUNTAINS UNLESS WE LIGHTEN THE LOAD.

WE'RE TOO HEAVY FOR ONE ENGINE SIR.

WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT THAT BOOK AGAIN, ARE YOU?

GUNS, AMMO, GEAR, I DON'T CARE, IT'S ALL GOTTA GO!

ANYTHING THAT CAN COME LOOSE GOES!

ALL RIGHT! WE GOTTA LIGHTEN THE LOAD, GUYS!

NOW HELP ME GET THIS MACHINE GUN UNBOLTED ...

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST IN OUR ESCORT OUT THERE.

BUT WHAT IF ENEMY FIGHTERS SHOW UP?

JUST LET US MAKE IT BACK, OKAY?

HOPE YOU LIKE GUNS, AMMO, RADIO, GEAR, AND EVERYTHING ELSE WE GIVE YOU!

HERE'S OUR OFFERINGS, MISS WITCHIE!

MEH. I'M FROM NORTH HOKKAIDO. EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS. BESIDES I STILL HAVE MY FUDOSHI.

HE DIDN'T SAY OUR CLOTHES TOO! DO YOU KNOW HOW COLD IT'S GONNA GET?

I'M NOT. I'M PUTTING IT INSIDE MY FLIGHT JACKET.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DUMP YOUR BOOK!

AND US WITH NO GUNS! DAMN!!

TWO SPITFIRES COMING IN FROM DIRECTLY BEHIND!

OH HELL, NOT NOW!

BANDITS!! BANDITS!!

YOU GUYS GET OUTTA HERE!!

I'LL DEAL WITH THESE TWO!

TIME TO DIE, TOMMY!

GYAAHHH!!!

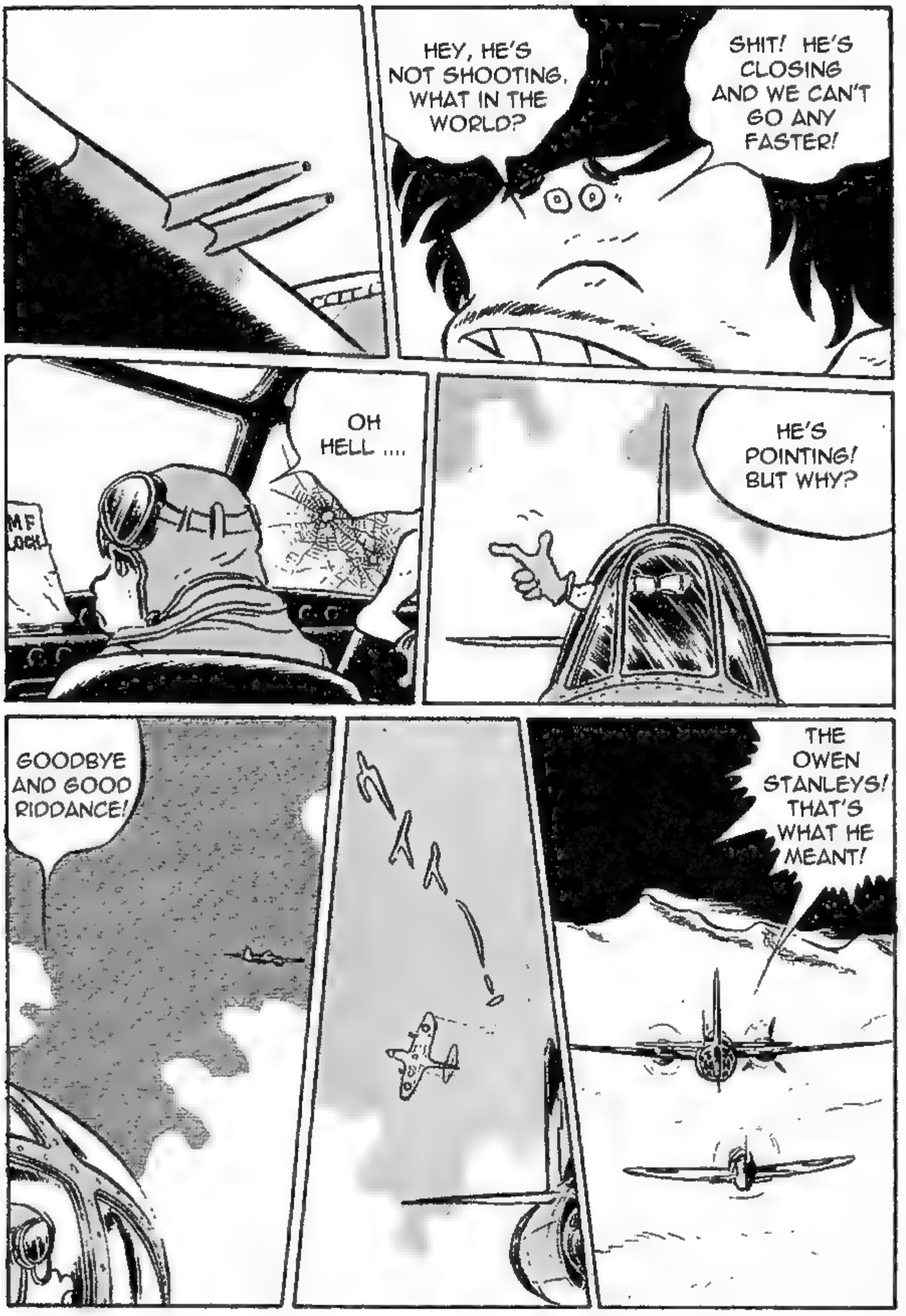
MUST HAVE HAD BATTLE DAMAGE FROM EARLIER, POOR BASTARD. WE ARE SO FUCKED.

WHAT HAPPENED?!

C'MON OLD GIRL, GIMME ALL YOU'VE GOT LEFT!

WE GOTTA OUTRUN HIM! HE'S ONLY GOT SO MUCH FUEL!

HE'S CLOSING!


HEY, HE'S NOT SHOOTING. WHAT IN THE WORLD?
SHIT! HE'S CLOSING AND WE CAN'T GO ANY FASTER!
OH HELL ....
HE'S POINTING! BUT WHY?
GOODBYE AND GOOD RIDDANCE!
THE OWEN STANLEYS! THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT!

MAYBE PHANTOM F. HARLOCK'S GOT THE ANSWER ...

I KNOW WE CAN'T MAKE IT OVER THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS ON ONLY ONE ENGINE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH OF OUR GEAR WE'VE DUMPED.

... THEN GO AHEAD AND DO IT. DO YOU UTMOST BEST, AND YOU WILL HAVE NOTHING OF WHICH TO BE ASHAMED."

"WHEN THAT TIME COMES, AND IF YOU FEEL YOU MUST DO WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO ...

スタンレーの魔女

ファントムFハーロック

WHAT WAS IT HE SAID? "THERE COMES A TIME WHEN IT SEEMS ALL ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU."

WE WERE SPARED BY THAT BRITISH PILOT FOR A REASON, BUT NOT THE REASON HE THOUGHT. HE THOUGHT WE WOULD CRASH INTO THE MOUNTAINS GIVEN OUR ONE ENGINE. WELL, WE WON'T!

I *WILL* MAKE IT! NOW LET'S BUCKLE DOWN AND DO IT, AND PROVE TO THE WITCH WHO RULES HERE!

I BELIEVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND MIGHT AND SOUL AND WILL THAT WE CAN AND WILL MAKE IT OVER THE OWEN STANLEYS IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING!

YOU HEAR THAT, OWEN STANLEY WITCH?! YOU WON'T BEAT ME! I WON'T LET YOU! I WILL BEAT YOU!

I CAN DO THIS! IF HARLOCK COULD DO IT BACK IN HIS DAY THEN I CAN DO THIS NOW!

I WILL BEAT YOU!!!

GROUND COMING UP FAST!!!

COME ON!!!

ALTITUDE 10,000!

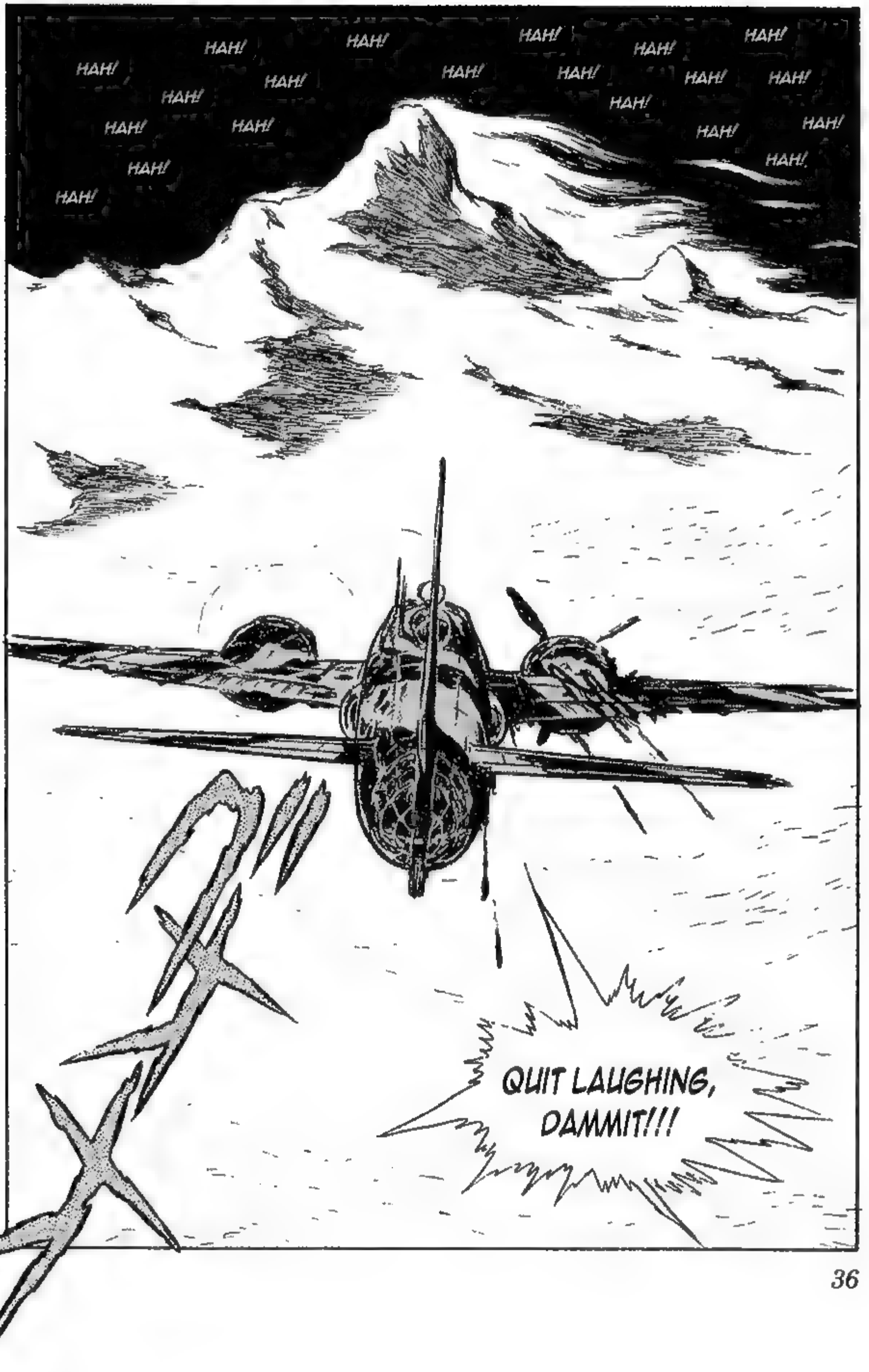
COME ON!!!

76

2500!
2000!

GROUND, 3500!

1000!


HAH!
HAH!
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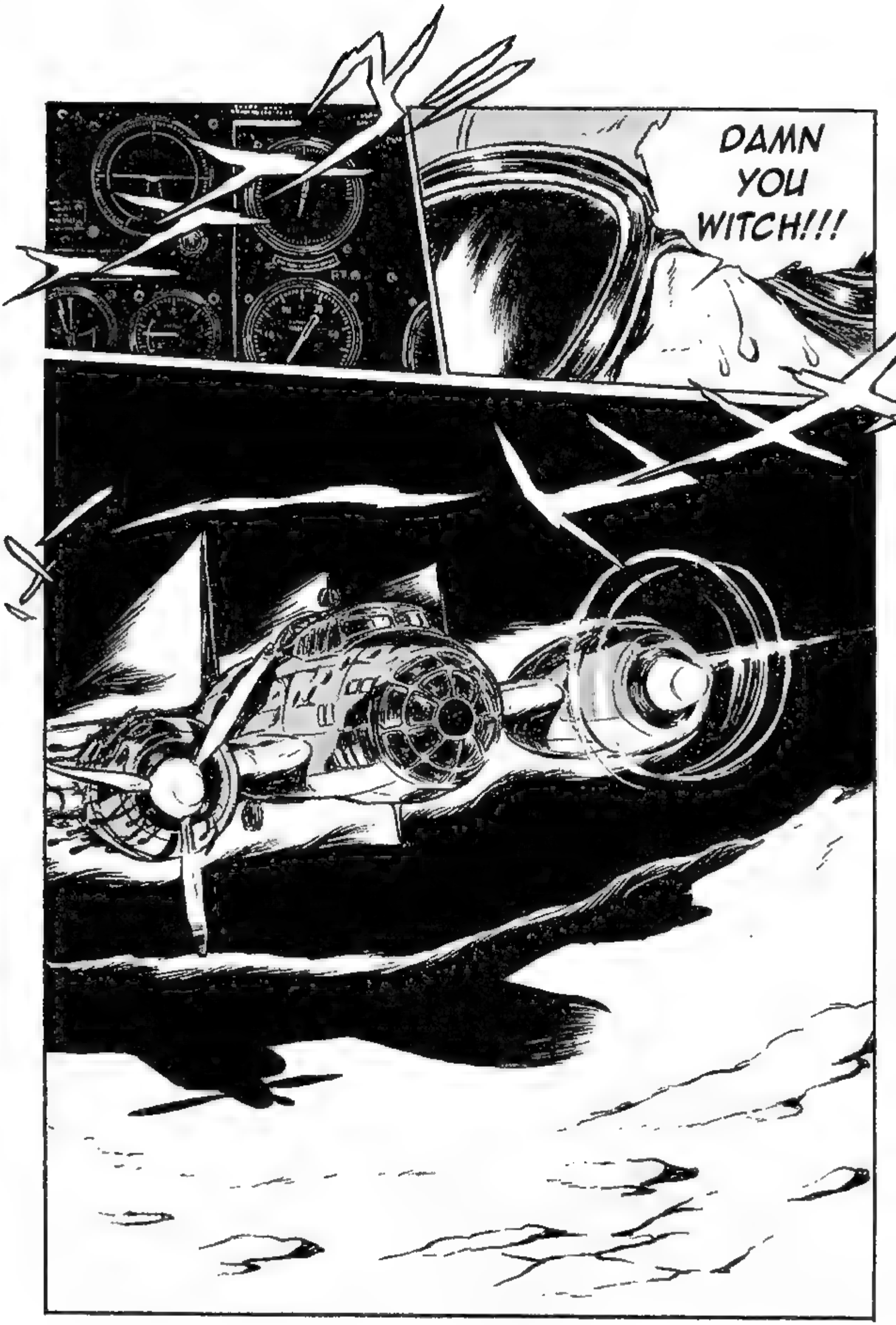
HAH!
HAH!
HAH!
HAH!
HAH!
QUIT LAUGHING, DAMMIT!!!


DAMN YOU WITCH!!!

WHAM!!!

I ... I DID IT! I BEAT THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH!

I MADE IT!!

HEY BOSS! I BEAT THE OWEN STANLEY--

BOSS?

GUYS?!

OH NO ....

(HOLLOW WIND-LIKE SOUND)

BBBRRRRRRRRRNNNNNRRRRRR...

GUYS!!!

GUYS?!

... BBBRRRRRRRRRNNNNNNNRRRRR...

ANYONE?

THEY DID IT TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD ... TO MAKE SURE I COULD MAKE IT ... BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I WANTED!

THEY ... THEY JUMPED. ALL OF THEM ....

WAS THIS WHAT YOU REALLY WANTED, WITCH?! TO ROB ME OF THE TASTE OF VICTORY?!?!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF WINNING IF YOU LOSE THE VERY THING YOU'RE TRYING TO WIN? OH GUYS .... !!

I WANTED ALL OF US TO MAKE IT BACK!

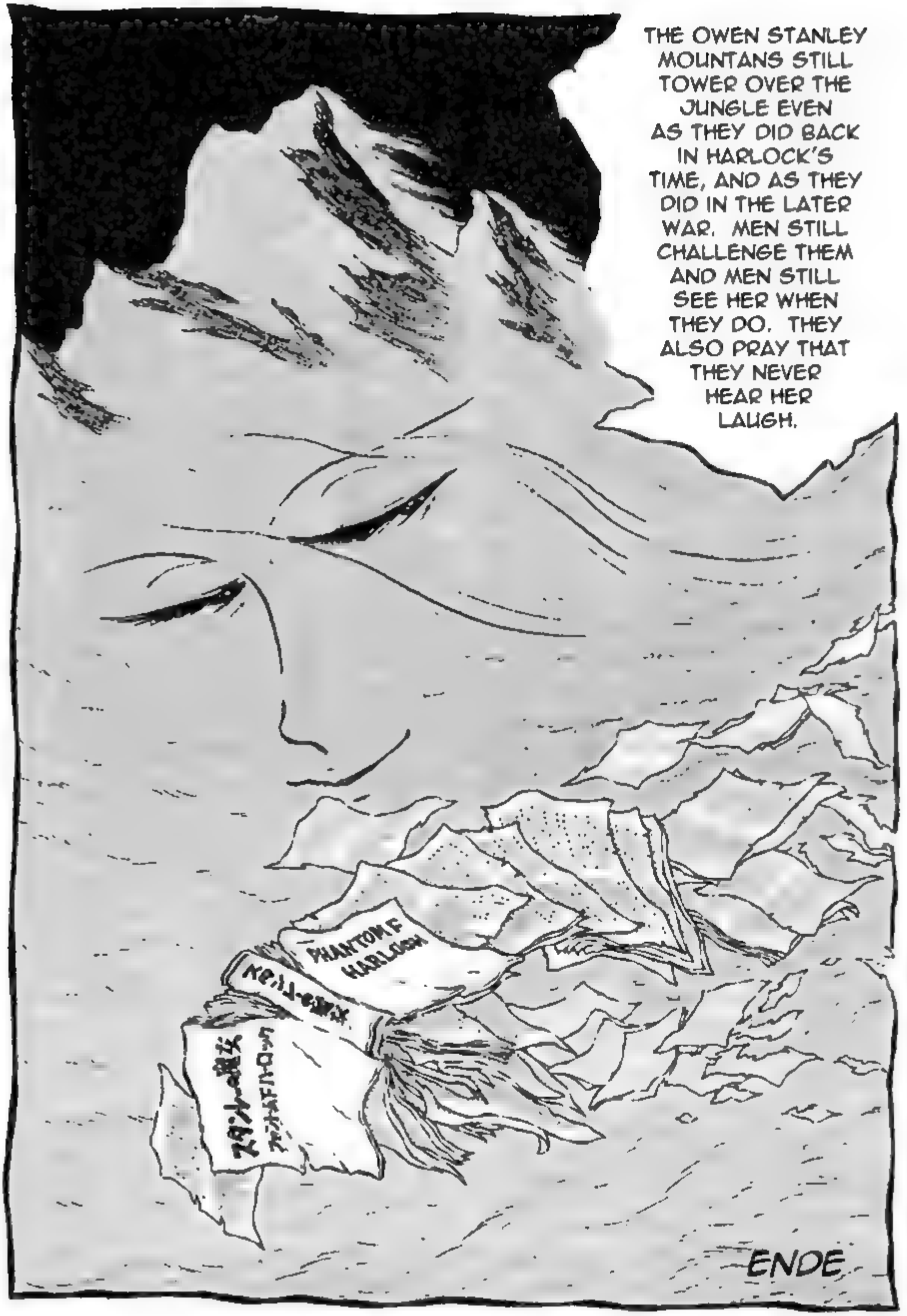
HAH! HAH! HAH!

YOU'RE LAUGHING! NO!!!

HAH! HAH! HAH! HAH! HAH! HAH! HAH!

YOU ...

DAMN YOU WITCH!!!!




<Published in Weekly Shonen Sunday, Issue 17, 1973>

THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH

# TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

# PILOT HUNTER

DRAGOON 44 TO HAWK 50!
DRAGOON 44 TO HAWK 50!
I'M ALL SHOT UP! LOSING HYDRAULIC PRESSURE!!
I'VE GOT TO BAIL OUT!!!

66

66

I'M 50 KILOMETERS OUT FROM CAPE KAMOI!

SEND WATERCAT A.S.A.P!

THAT WAS NO ORDINARY ARMY FIGHTER PLANE! MUST HAVE BEEN A NEW TYPE! BUT WHAT?

NOT THAT IT MATTERS NOW. I'M GONNA BE STUCK HERE UNTIL WATERCAT COMES AND PICKS ME UP.

ROGER, HAWK 50! READ YOUR POSITION! WATERCAT COMING!

HANG IN THERE!

# PILOT HUNTER

NOT LONG AFTER ...
WATERCAT TO HOME PLATE. WE'RE AT DRAGOON 44'S LAST REPORTED POSITION AND--
I SEE HIM!
HE'S NOT MOVING .... HOME PLATE, THIS IS WATERCAT. I THINK WE'RE TOO LATE FOR DRAGOON 44.
COPY THAT, WATERCAT. GO AHEAD AND RETRIEVE THE BODY. HOME PLATE, OUT.
SCTHUNKLH!
BLAMMMM!

FUCK ...

THAT'S A RIFLE SHOT ... BUT FROM THERE?!?!

THAT'S GOT TO BE AT LEAST A THOUSAND YARDS! WHOEVER DID THAT IS ONE HELLUVA MARKSMAN.

HOW'D IT TURN OUT?

REMINDS ME OF THE STORY ABOUT THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN SNIPERS IN STALINGRAD.

DAMN.

THEY SHOT EACH OTHER AT LONG RANGE.

ME NEITHER.

I DIDN'T THINK THESE LITTLE YELLOW BASTARDS COULD HAVE ANYONE THAT GOOD.

ROGER!

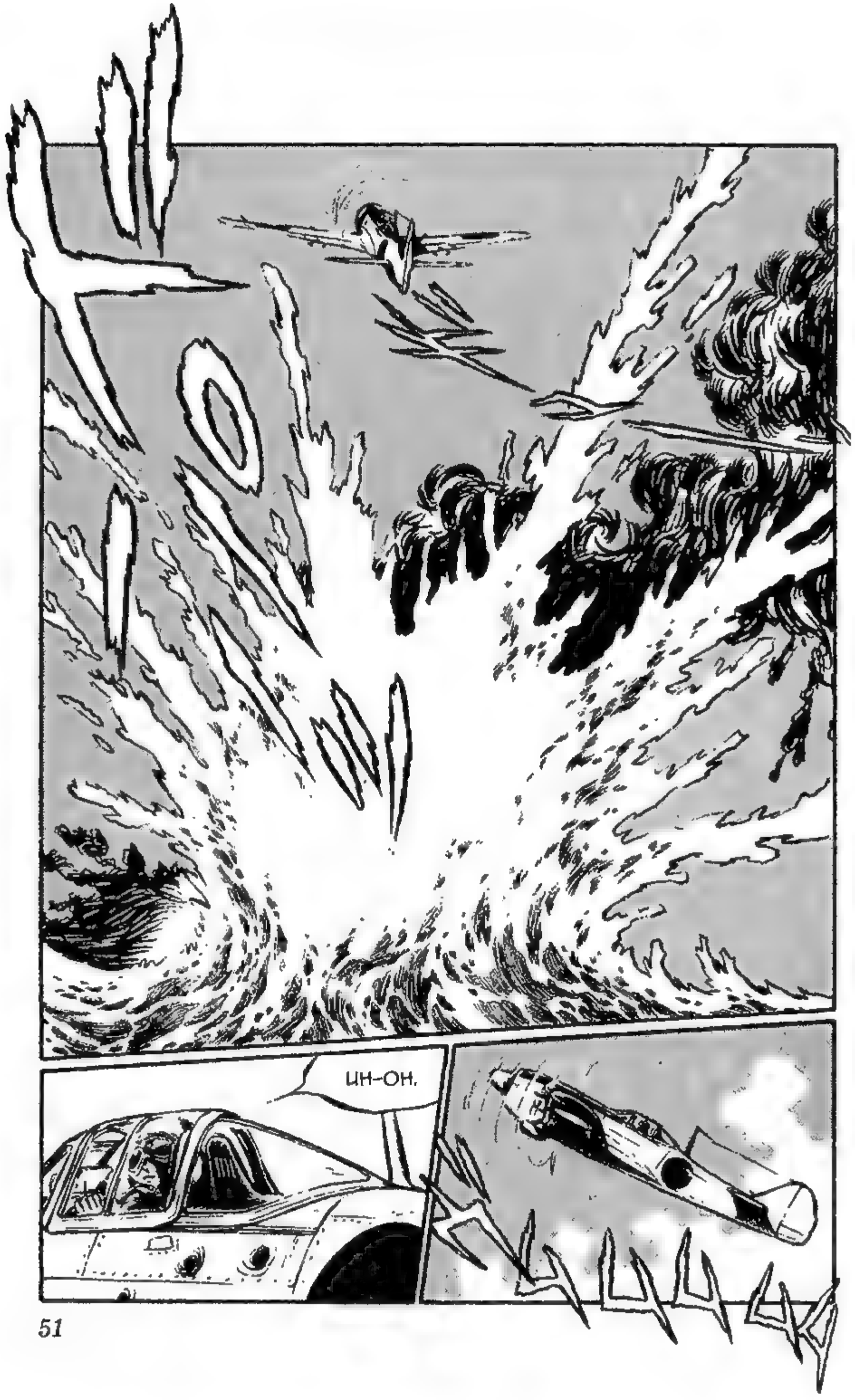
WATERCAT, ABORTING RETRIEVAL DUE TO ENEMY SNIPER!

WE'RE ABORTING THE RETRIEVAL.

YES SIR!

AWW, SHIT!!!

BANDIT, 5 O'CLOCK HIGH, COMING IN FAST!


ИН-ОН.

HOME PLATE, THIS IS KIT 17. WATERCAT KILLED BY AN OSCAR! WE'RE GOING AFTER HIM, OVER!

OSCAR - Allied code name for the Japanese Army's Nakajima Ki-43 fighter plane

ROGER!

DROP YOUR TANK AND FOLLOW ME!

DON'T OVERDO IT, KIT 15! STAY ON TOP OF HIM!

SIR, HE'S FAST! FASTER THAN ME!! I NEED HELP!

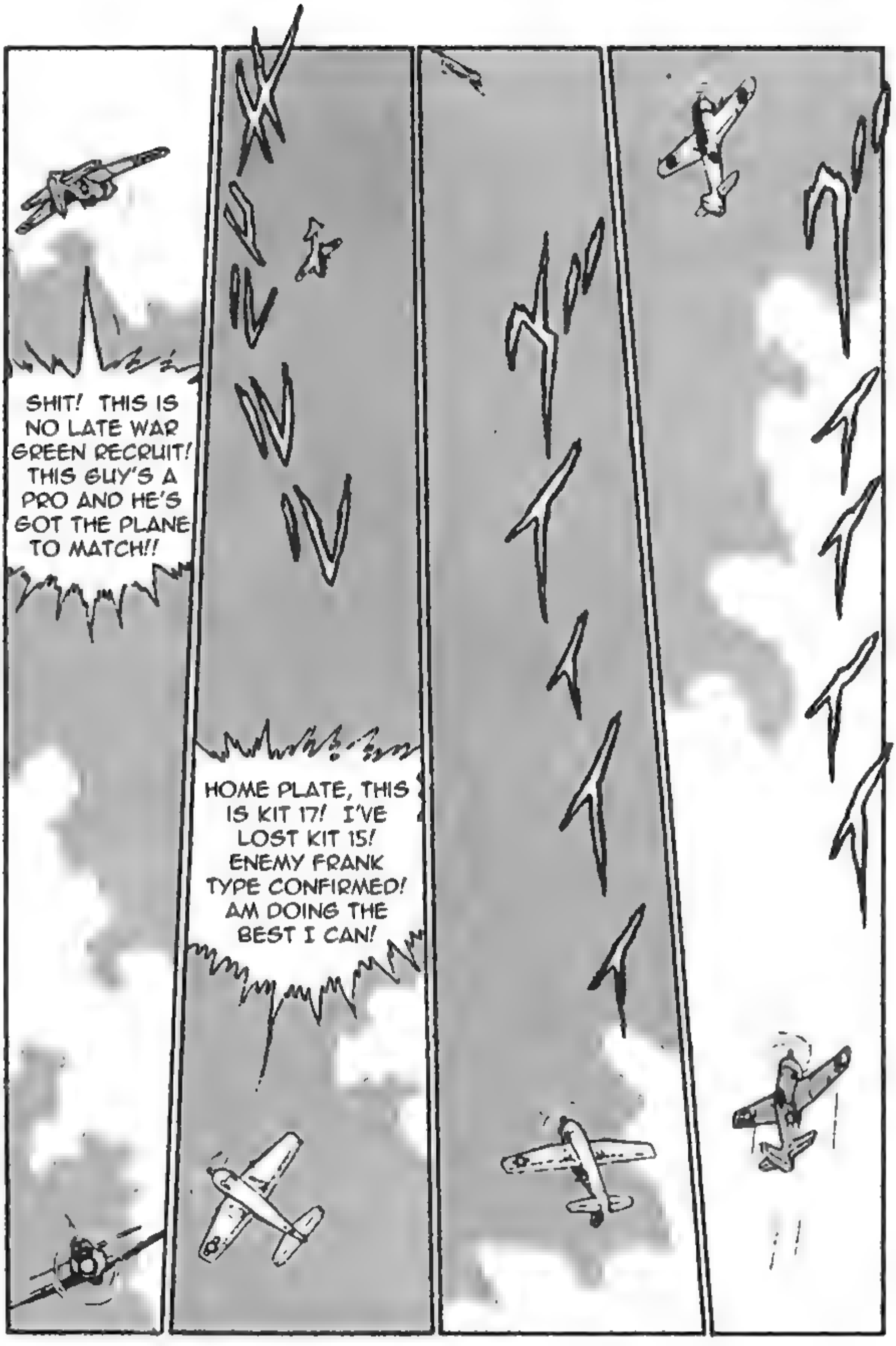
YOU IDIOT! YOU LET HIM GET BEHIND YOU!

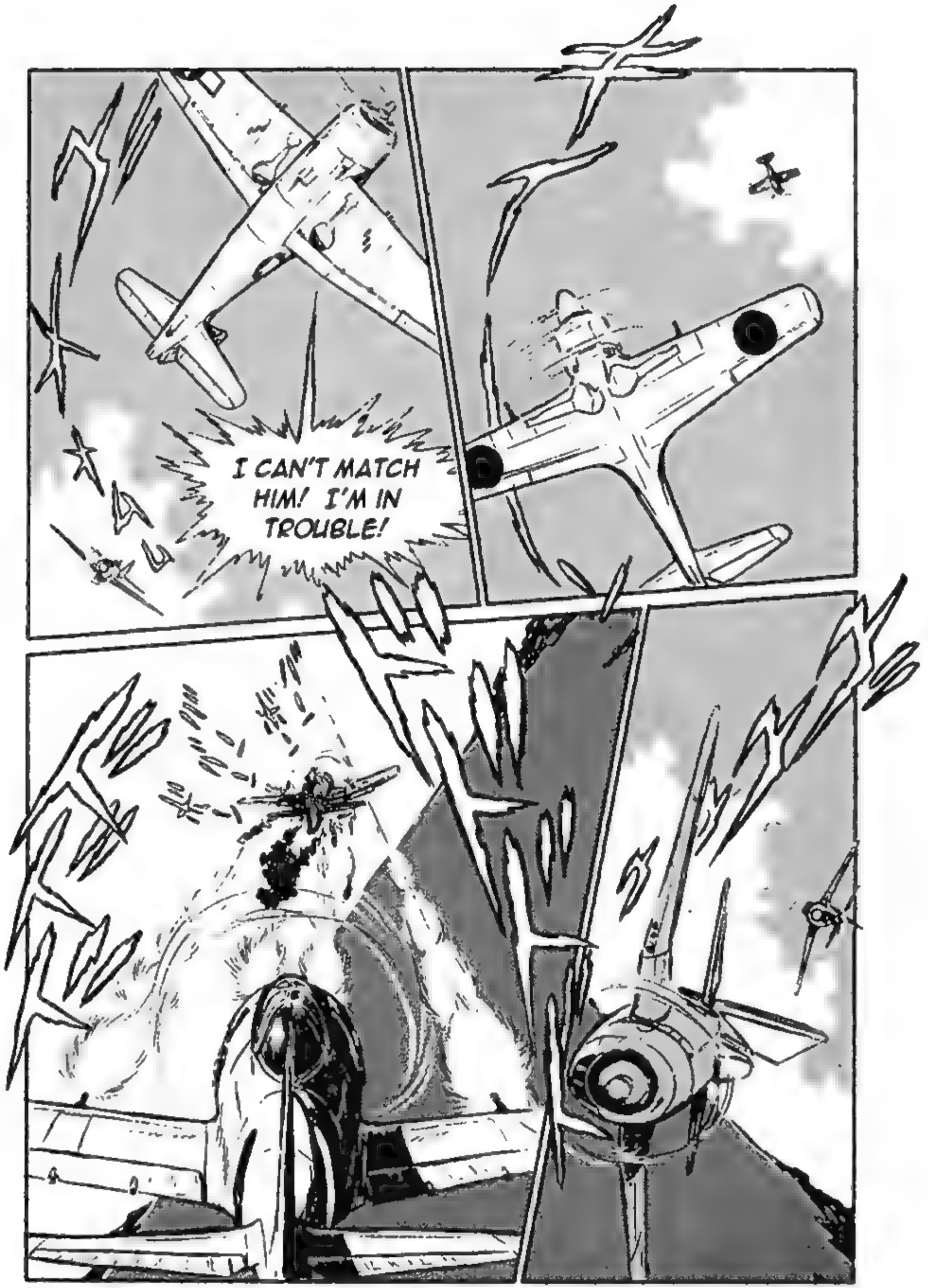
KIT 17, SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A FRANK BY THE TAIL, NOT AN OSCAR!

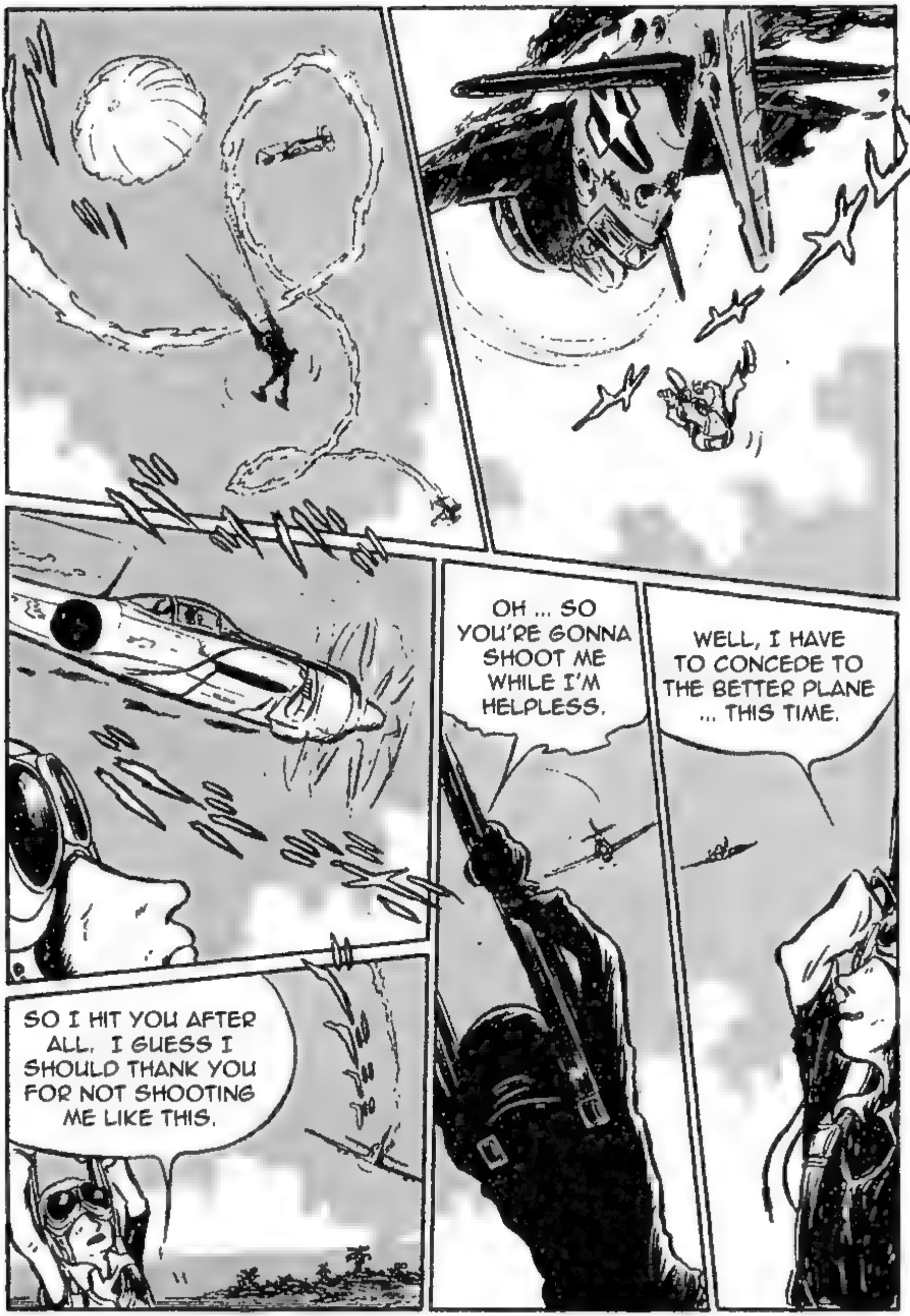
JESUS GOD, I CAN'T SHAKE HIM! NOT ONLY IS HE FASTER BUT HE CAN OUT FLY ME!! HELP!!!

**FRANK - Allied code name for the Nakajima KI-84 "Hayate," which was faster than the F6F Hellcat.**

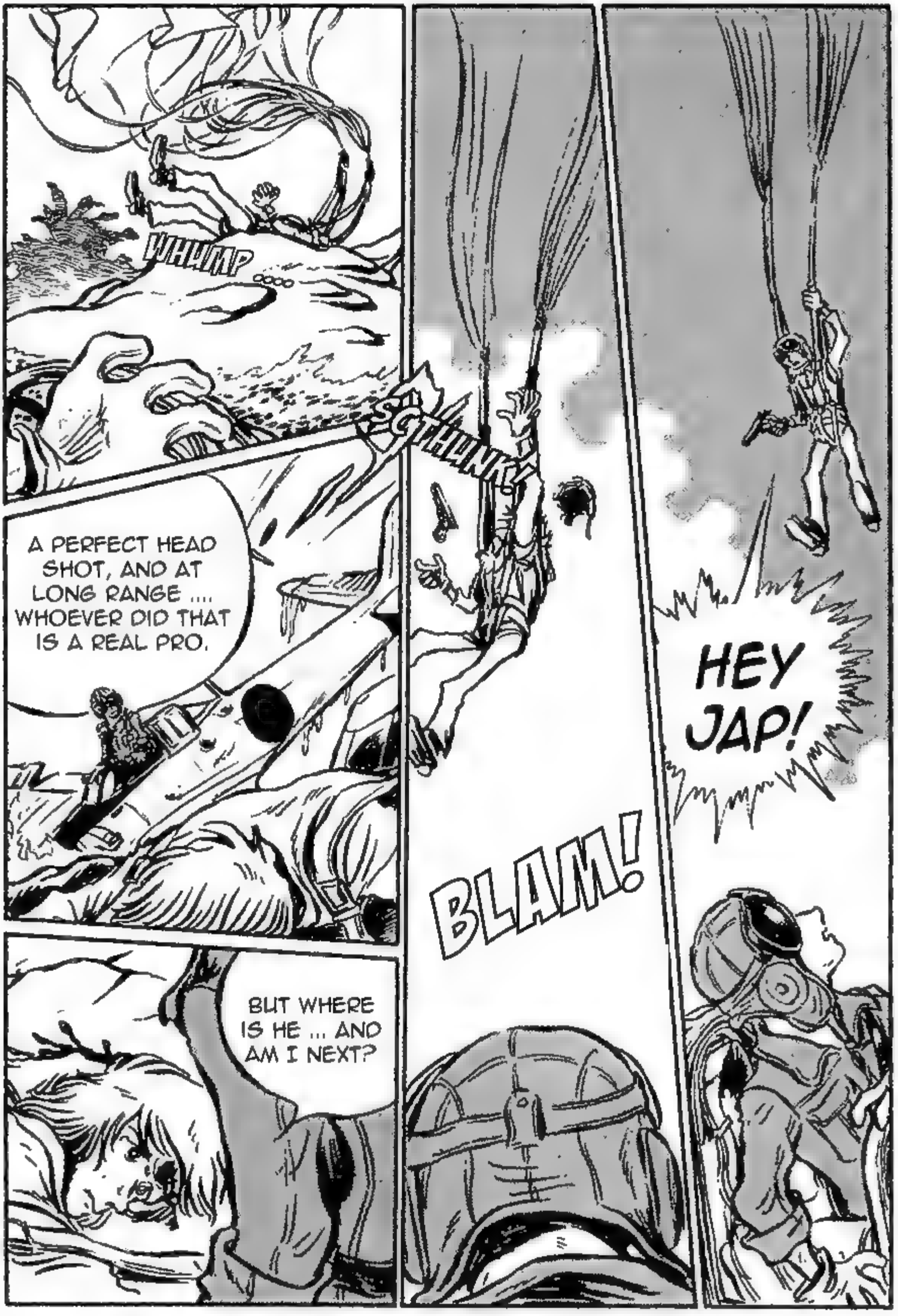
I'M COMING! JUST HANG--
HURRY!!!!!


SHIT! THIS IS NO LATE WAR GREEN RECRUIT! THIS GUY'S A PRO AND HE'S GOT THE PLANE TO MATCH!!
HOME PLATE, THIS IS KIT 17! I'VE LOST KIT 15! ENEMY FRANK TYPE CONFIRMED! AM DOING THE BEST I CAN!


I CAN'T MATCH HIM! I'M IN TROUBLE!


SO I HIT YOU AFTER ALL. I GUESS I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR NOT SHOOTING ME LIKE THIS.
OH ... SO YOU'RE GONNA SHOOT ME WHILE I'M HELPLESS.
WELL, I HAVE TO CONCEDE TO THE BETTER PLANE ... THIS TIME.

WELL BUDDY, IT LOOKS LIKE WE GET TO FINISH THIS ON LAND, AND I'VE GOT THE BETTER GUN.
.....


WHUMP
A PERFECT HEAD SHOT, AND AT LONG RANGE .... WHOEVER DID THAT IS A REAL PRO.
SGT HUNT
BUT WHERE IS HE ... AND AM I NEXT?
BLAM!
HEY JAP!

AT LEAST I OWE YOU A DECENT BURIAL ...
HWHHAP!!
WHAT THE HELL?!?! HEY, FELLA!! I'M ON YOUR SIDE!!!
* ECHOES OF A RIFLE SHOT DYING AWAY *
THWACKKK!!!
NOW HE'S AIMING FOR THE PLANE. PROBABLY TRYING TO BLOW IT UP, BUT YOU'RE SHOOTING IN THE WRONG PLACE. THAT'S A HAYATE, NOT A--
KLIK-KLAK!
THWACKKK!!!

KA-WHAMMM!!!

BY THE GODS! THAT GUY MUST BE CRAZY!! I MIGHT BE NEXT!!!

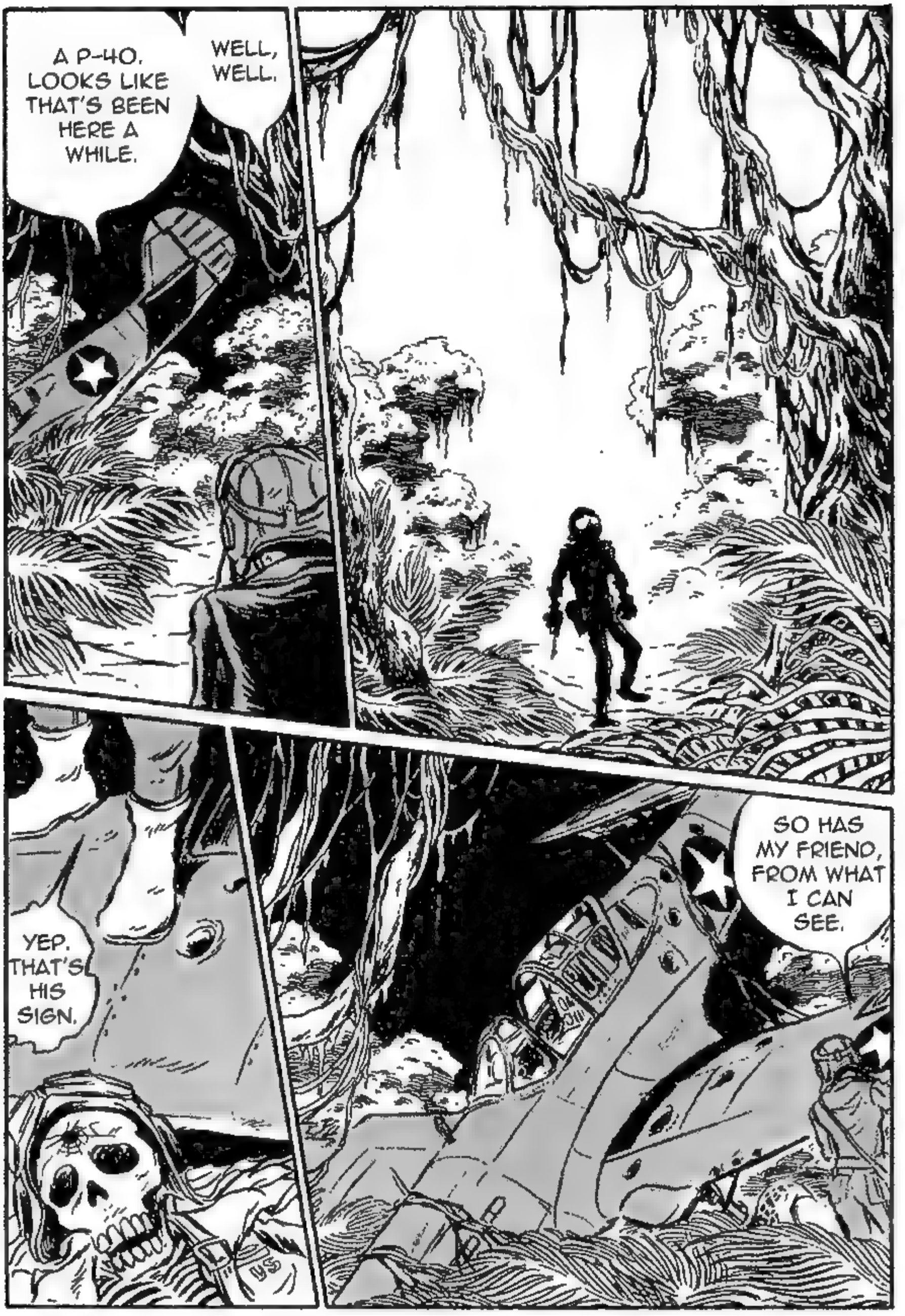
THIS IS NUTS. I MIGHT BE KILLED BY ONE OF MY OWN.

I MIGHT WIND UP LIKE THAT AMERICAN, POOR BASTARD.

HE COULD BE ANYWHERE IN THERE.

I GUESS IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO DO. IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A CHOICE.

THIS IS ALL I'VE GOT AGAINST A SCOPED SNIPER RIFLE.


A P-40. LOOKS LIKE THAT'S BEEN HERE A WHILE.
WELL, WELL.
YEP. THAT'S HIS SIGN.
SO HAS MY FRIEND, FROM WHAT I CAN SEE.

WELCOME TO MY JUNGLE.

I WON'T. I RECOGNIZE THE UNIFORM, CAPTAIN.

OH! HI! I'M CAPTAIN SHINJI, ARMY AIR SERVICE. DON'T SHOOT, OKAY!

WE WERE BEING SENT IN AS REINFORCEMENTS WHEN WE WERE TORPEDOED BY AN AMERICAN SUB.

... IT'S OUT THERE. I'M THE ONLY SURVIVOR.

I'M NOT ONE TO GIVE MY NAME, AND AS FOR MY UNIT ...

WHO ARE YOU, WHAT'S YOUR UNIT, AND WHERE IS IT?

I'VE BEEN LIVING OFF THE LAND AND WHAT I CAN FIND OR SALVAGE EVER SINCE. I ALSO KEEP BUSY AS YOU SAW.

DON'T BE. I'M LUCKY TO BE ALIVE.

KLIK!

OH, I'M SORRY--

DON'T MAKE ME PULL RANK.

YOU'RE INSISTENT. DOES IT MATTER?

NAME AND RANK?

THAT'S MY STORY.

DO NAMES REALLY MATTER IN WAR?

BUT EVERYONE HAS A NAME.

DON'T MAKE ME REFUSE.

A HUNDRED KILOMETERS AT LEAST, EASTWARD ALONG THE COAST. HOPE YOU GOT GOOD BOOTS.

WHERE'S THE NEAREST BASE?

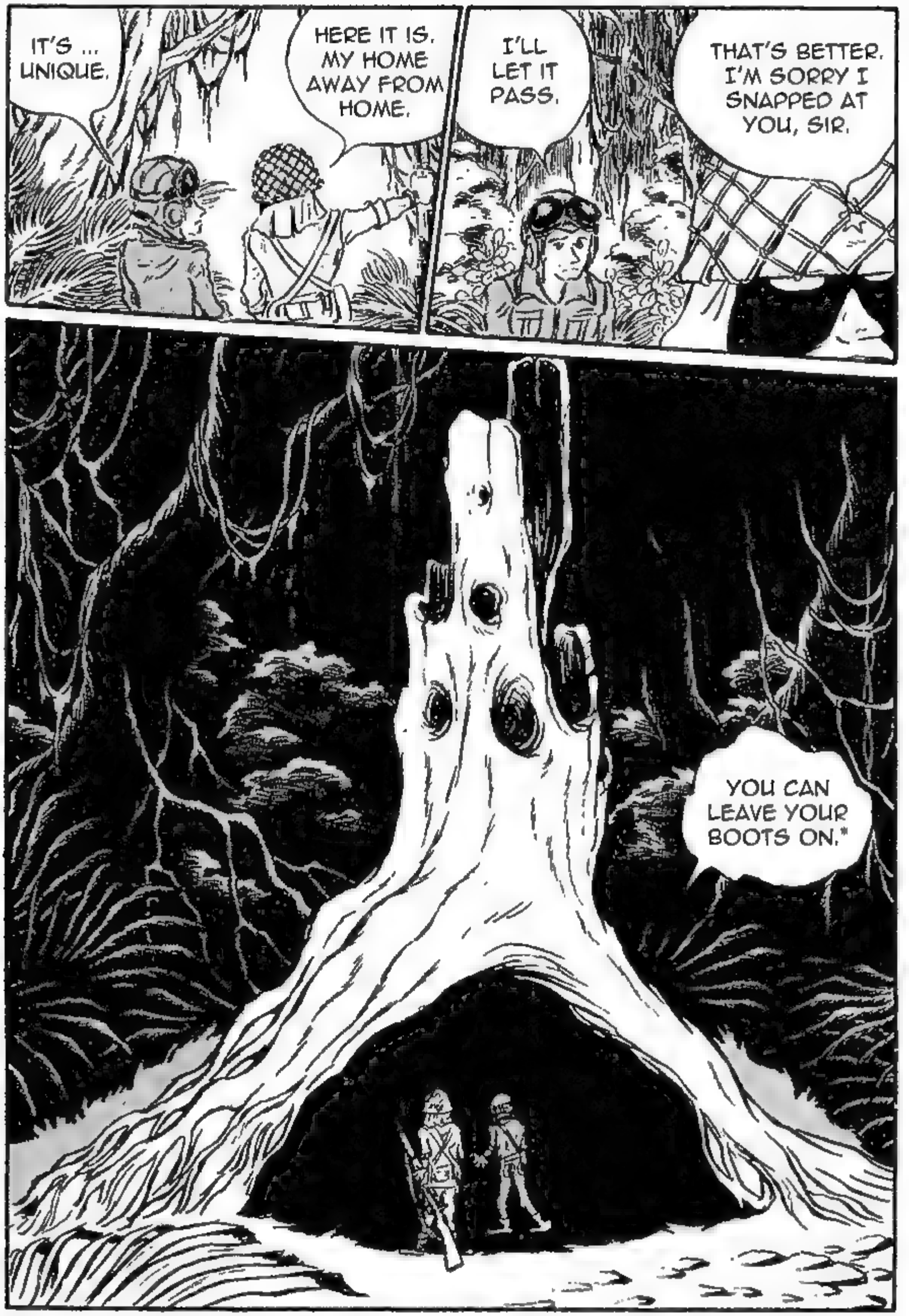
TO KEEP THE AMERICANS FROM TRYING TO RETRIEVE IT.

WHY SHOOT MY PLANE?

THERE'S JUST A CHANCE ONE OF THOSE GOD DAMN AMERICANS IS GOING TO GET SHOT DOWN SOMEWHERE I'M NOT, AND THEN WHERE WILL YOU BE? NOW WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, *SIR*, LET'S GET MOVING!

THEN PICK UP THE PACE. DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT IN THE OPEN.

THEN I. GUESS I'M HEADED WHERE YOU'RE GOING.




(*) IN JAPANESE CULTURE IT IS TRADITIONAL TO REMOVE ONE'S FOOTWEAR WHEN ENTERING A HOME. THE SOLDIER IS BEING SARCASTIC.

YOU'RE WELL STOCKED FOR A LONE SOLDIER.
AS I SAID, I'VE BEEN SCROUNGING ANYTHING I CAN FIND. I ALSO DIVE THE SHIPWRECKS AT NIGHT. MOST OF THE GOOD STUFF CAME FROM THOSE.

HEY! DON'T MESS WITH MY TROPHY CASE, YOU HEAR?!

HAD TO HAUL THAT BIG GUN UP IN PIECES.

I'M NOT A BOMBER PILOT AND I DON'T STRAFE THE HELPLESS.

YOU KNOW, I LOVE SEEING HOW THEY LOOK RIGHT BEFORE I SHOOT THEM. HOW 'BOUT YOU, WHENEVER YOU BOMB OR STRAFE ANYONE?

THANK YOU. HOW ABOUT SOME GOOD OL' ARMY RATIONS, LIKE MAMA USED TO MAKE BACK HOME?

YOU ALSO GET A CHOICE UP THERE. I DON'T DOWN HERE. THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE.

I TRIED TO BECOME A PILOT. THEY SAID MY "MENTALITY" WAS BETTER FOR A SOLDIER.

DOING IT IN A PLANE WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER.

OUR ENEMY IS MOST VULNERABLE WHEN THEY CAN'T SHOOT BACK. THAT'S THE BEST TIME TO KILL THEM.

OH? THEN YOU'RE THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE.

* SOUND OF A CRIPPLED AIRPLANE SPIRALING IN FOR A CRASH *

YOU COULD HAVE JUST STOPPED AND LEFT, YOU KNOW.

IT'S BEEN A YEAR NOW.

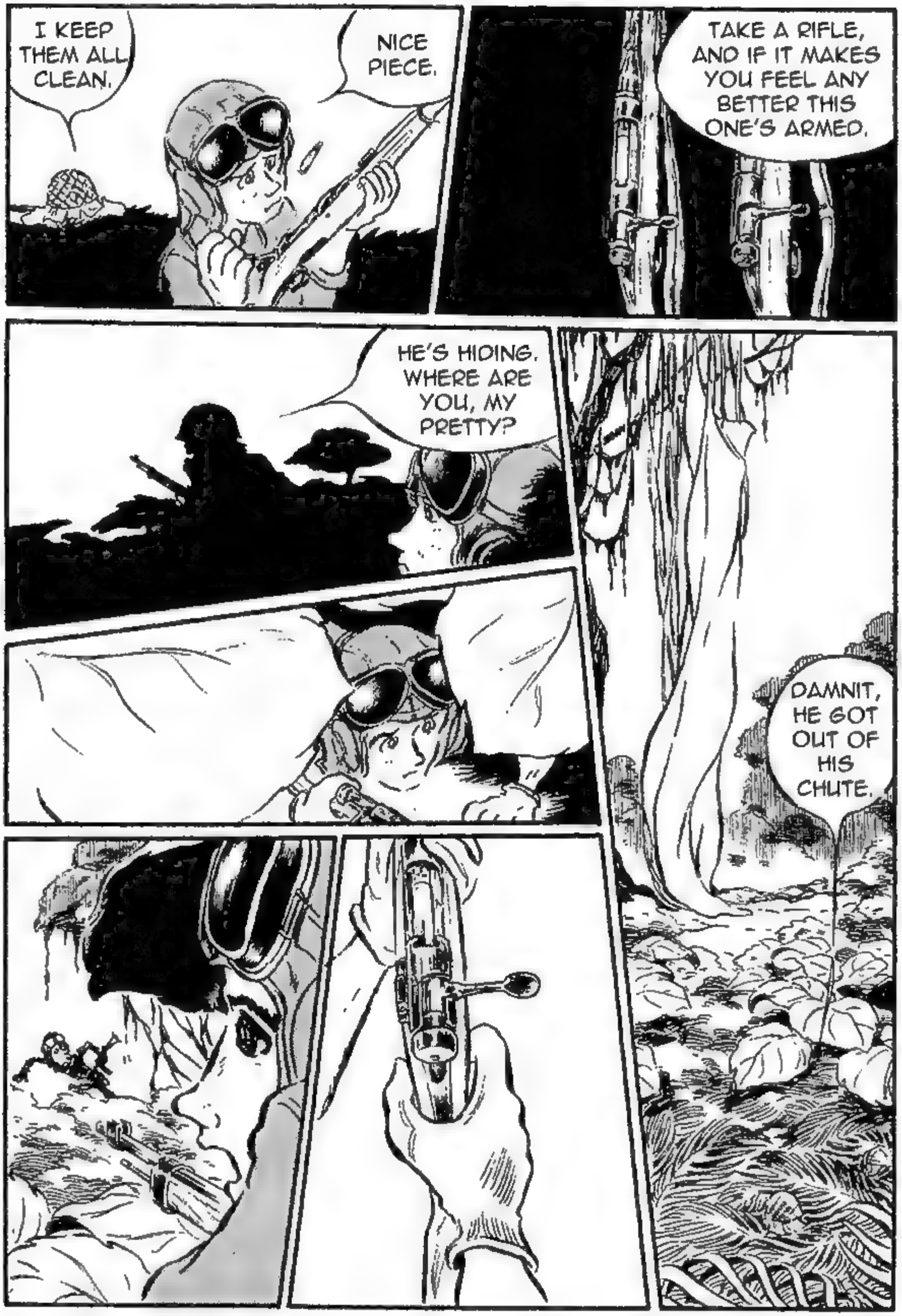
SOUNDS LIKE WE'VE GOT COMPANY. LET'S GO CAPTURE HIM.

I'M GONNA KILL HIM.

THOSE DAMN "FRANKS" ARE TOO GOOD FOR THEIR OWN GOOD!

DO YOU THINK THAT YANKEE WOULDN'T HESITATE TO KILL YOU?!

CRASH!!!


I KEEP THEM ALL CLEAN.
NICE PIECE.
TAKE A RIFLE, AND IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER THIS ONE'S ARMED.
HE'S HIDING. WHERE ARE YOU, MY PRETTY?
DAMNIT, HE GOT OUT OF HIS CHUTE.

BLAM!!!!!

YOU NEED TO LEARN TO ACT AND NOT REACT, CAPTAIN. REACTING WILL EVENTUALLY GET YOU KILLED.

YOU FOOL!!! NOW YOU'VE WARNED HIM!!!

EXACTLY WHAT I SAID.

BULLSHIT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

I GOT TAUGHT THAT SAME BULLSHIT TOO.

I'M SORRY. YOU KNOW WE'RE TRAINED TO SHOOT ON SIGHT.

SO YOU WAIT FOR IT, AND ONLY THEN CAN YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN.

THE ONLY SURE KILL IS WITH A CLEAR SHOT.

THE REALITY OUT HERE IS THIS:

KA-THOOM!!!
ALL RIGHT, YANKEE. YOU BLEW UP MY HOME. I'M NOT JUST MAD, I'M PISSED.

!!

CAPTAIN, DO YOU SEE HIM ANYWHERE? CAPTAIN? CAPTAIN ...

WHERE ARE YOU, YOU SUNUVABITCH? I WANT YOUR ASS BAD!

SO WHO'S GOING TO WIN THIS DUEL?

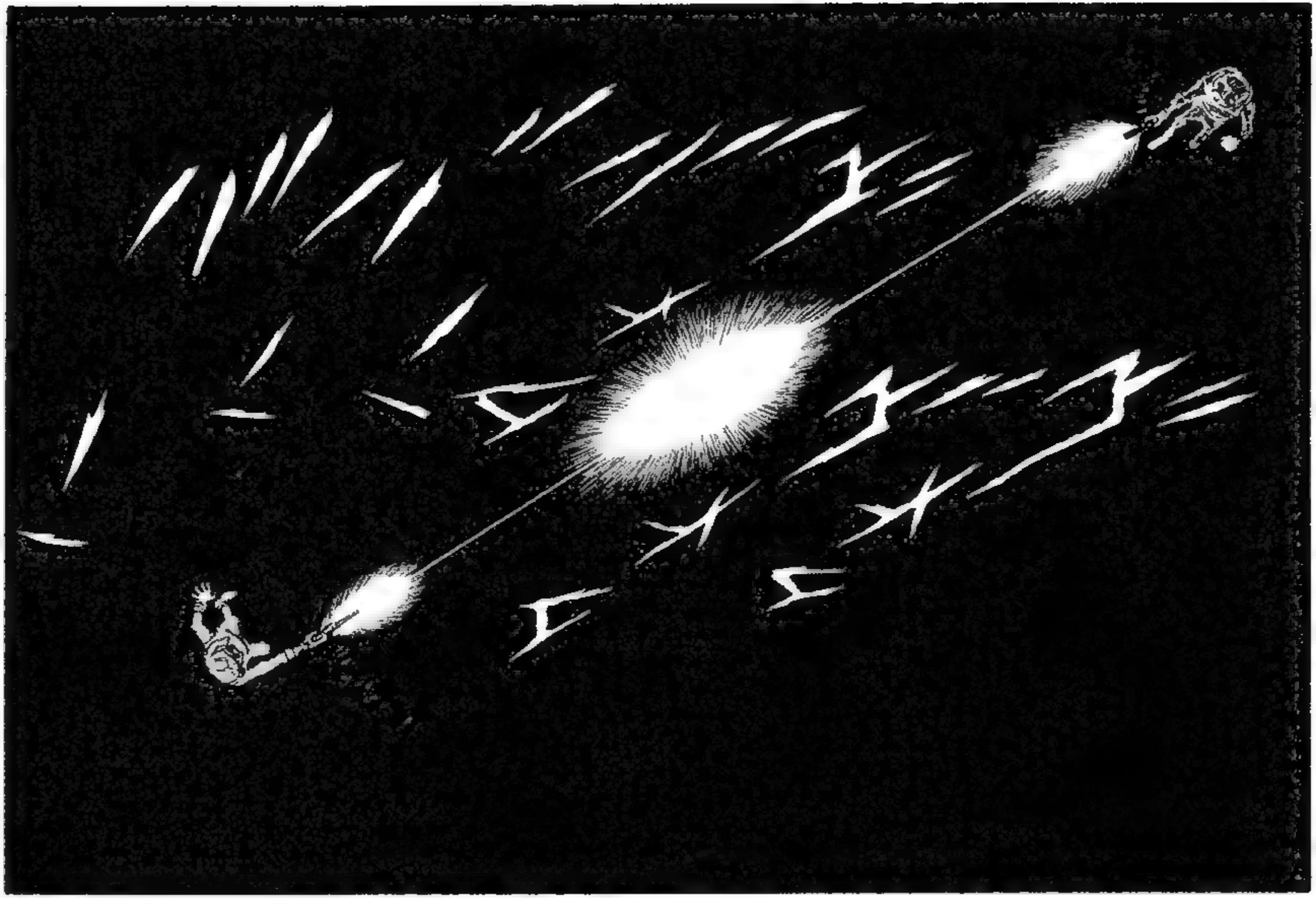
THE AMERICAN WITH HIS BIG PISTOL, OR YOU WITH YOUR LITTLE POP GUN? WHO, I WONDER?

HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY, BUT CAN YOU TAKE HIM OUT OR DO I HAVE TO?

YOU GET TO FIGHT THE WAR LIKE I DO.

WELL NOW, ISN'T THIS SPECIAL? GUESS WHAT, CAPTAIN?

WHICH OF YOU HAS THE QUICKER DRAW? WHICH IF YOUR GUNS WILL WIN?
THIS IS LIKE WATCHING AN AMERICAN WESTERN.



DO YOU KNOW WHY YOU'RE STILL STANDING?

BECAUSE YOU COULD HANDLE YOUR GUN AND HE COULDN'T.

THE COLT .45 ACP IS A GREAT PISTOL ...

... PROVIDED YOU CAN HANDLE ITS RECOIL GIVEN THE SIZE AND GRAIN OF THE BULLET IT FIRES. HE COULDN'T AND THAT'S WHY HE COULDN'T HOLD HIS GUN ON TARGET.

YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH YOUR STANDARD ISSUE 8MM NAMBU ARMY POPGUN, HAD A LIGHTER BULLET ...

... WITH FAR LESS RECOIL. YOU COULD HOLD YOUR GUN ON TARGET ... SIR.

FRANKLY I'M JEALOUS. I WAS HOPING I'D GET A CRACK AT HIM.

LOOK AT IT BURN. IF ONLY IT WERE THE LAST ONE, BUT IT WON'T BE.

THERE'LL BE MORE, AND THEY'LL KEEP ME BUSY FOR QUITE A WHILE.

SUIT YOURSELF. IT'S DUE EAST ALONG THE COAST. THE FIRST WRECK YOU COME TO ...

I'M DONE HERE.

LOOK .. UHMM ... I THINK I'LL TRY HOOFING IT TO THAT BASE.

NAMBU TANKER PISTOL. BETTER THAN YOURS.

HERE'S ONE FOR THE ROAD.

YES?

AND SIR?

... WILL HAVE A HIDDEN AMMO CACHE. 160 ROUNDS FOR THAT RIFLE.

I GOT PLENTY GEAR HIDDEN ALL OVER.

BUT WHAT WILL YOU---?

A GIFT IS A GIFT! TAKE IT AND GO ... AND GOOD LUCK, SIR. I MEAN THAT.

I ALSO KNOW HOW RARE THEY ARE TOO AMONG THE LOWER RANKS. ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GIVE IT TO ME?

THIS IS QUITE A GIFT. I KNOW HOW GOOD THESE ARE.

... YOU TAKE IT AND USE IT. THAT'S THE WAY IT IS IN ANY WAR.

YOU ALWAYS TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET, AND IF YOU FIND SOMETHING BETTER ...

THERE AREN'T TOO MANY OF THESE EITHER. I WAS LUCKY TO FIND IT.

ANYWAY I PREFER MY SCOPED TYPE 97 SNIPER RIFLE.

THEY'RE GONNA OUT-MAKE US ONE DAY, YOU KNOW. THEY'RE TOO BIG.

EVEN THE AMERICANS KNOW THAT, ONLY THEY'RE GOOD AT MAKING BETTER TOO!

... I CAN CONTINE TO KILL, AND KILL, AND KILL UNTIL I CAN'T KILL ANY MORE OR UNTIL THEY KILL ME FIRST!

BUT UNTIL THEN I'M GOING TO KEEP ON FIGHTING, AND AS LONG AS I'VE GOT OUR WONDEFUL ARISAKA RIFLE ...

REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU CAPTAIN, AND IF YOU EVER FLY AROUND HERE AGAIN BE CAREFUL, NOW THAT YOU KNOW I'M HERE.

SURE.

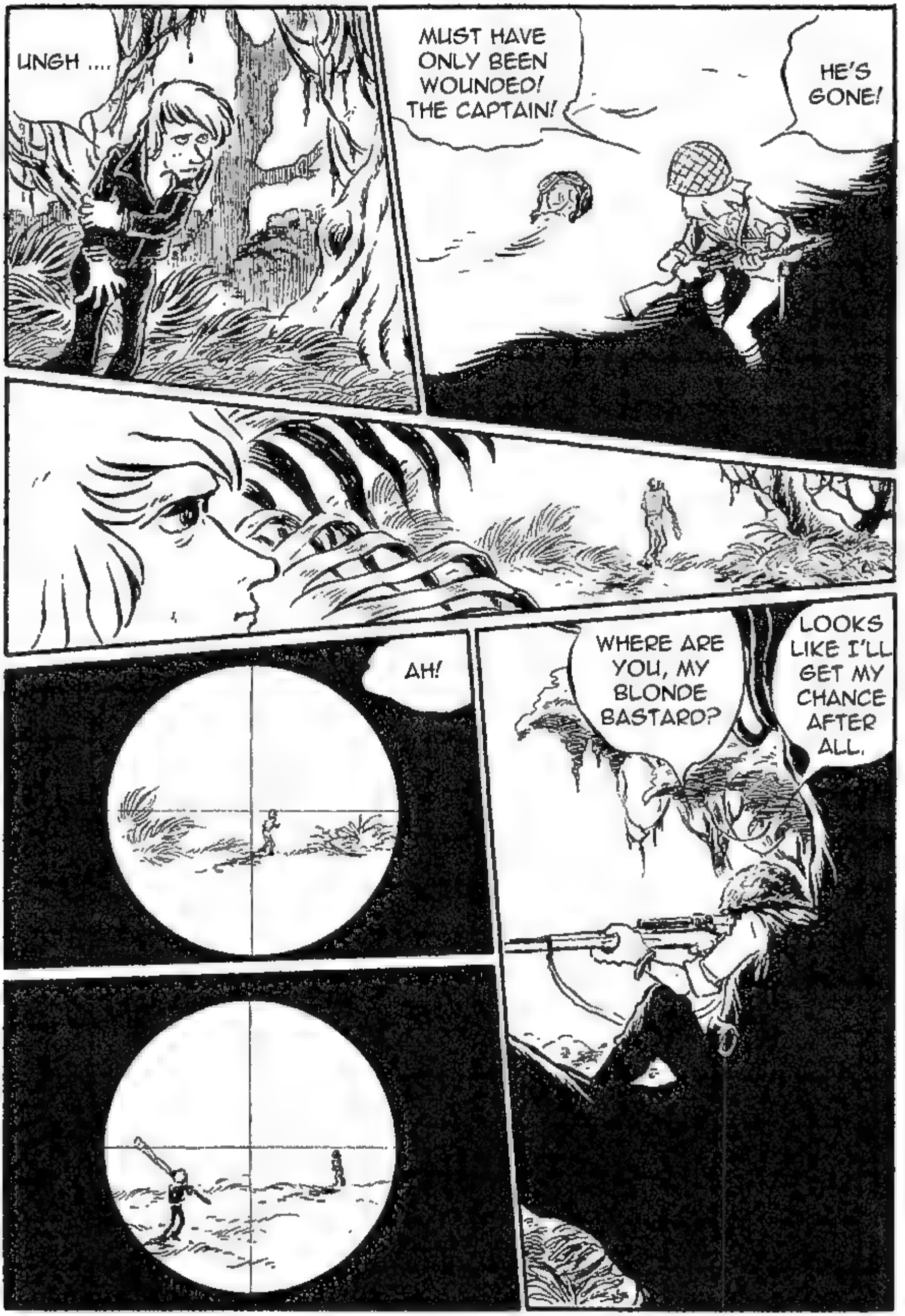
UH, YEAH. SEE YOU.

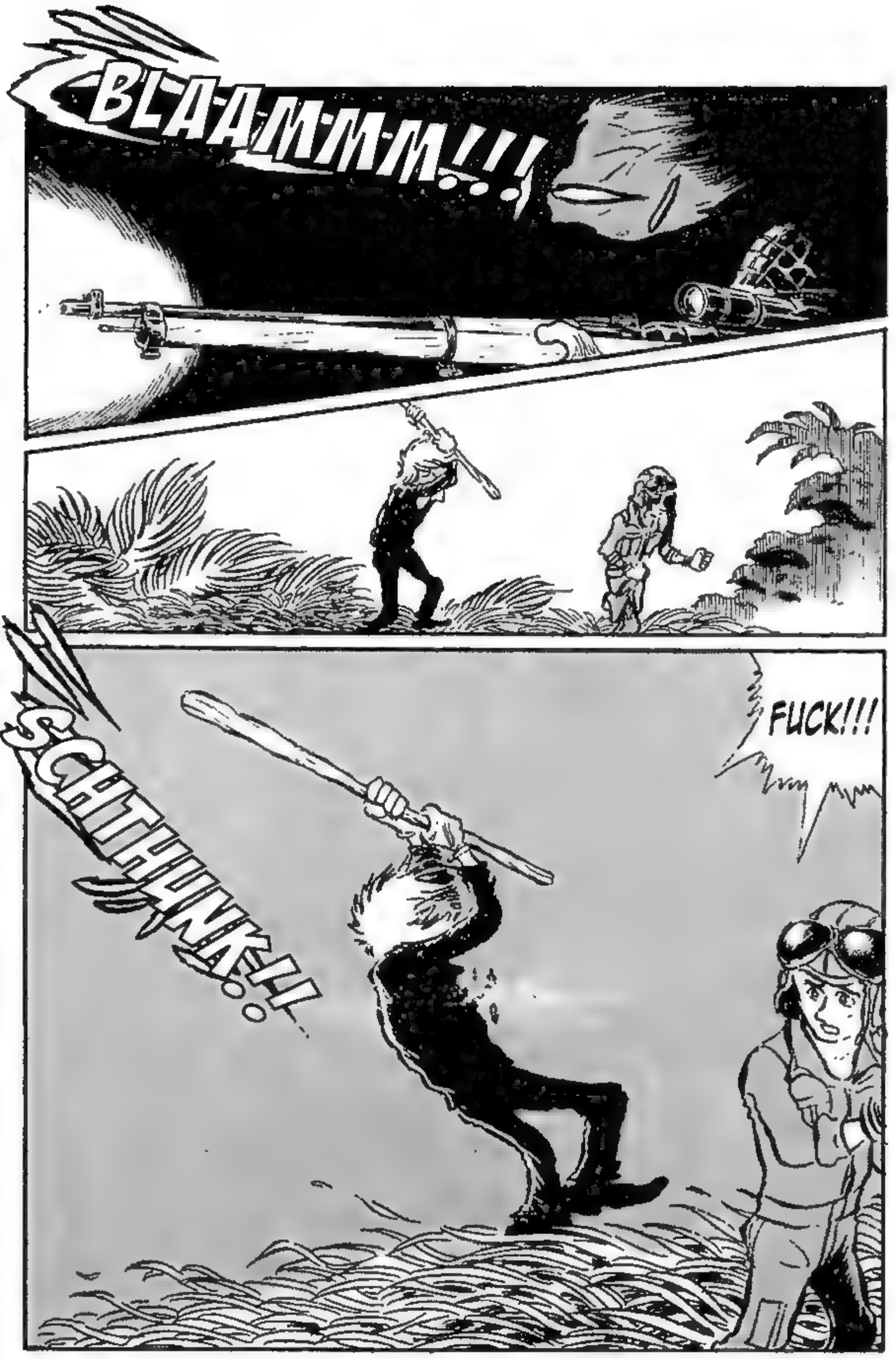
I'M A GREAT SHOT! I'M ...

AS MANY AMERICAN PLANES COME AROUND NOW IT WON'T TAKE ANY TIME AT ALL!

I'LL HAVE MY HOME AND TROPHY CASE REBUILT IN NO TIME!

AND IT WON'T TAKE ME LONG TO FILL THAT TROPHY CASE AGAIN!


UNGH ....
MUST HAVE ONLY BEEN WOUNDED! THE CAPTAIN!
HE'S GONE!
AH!
WHERE ARE YOU, MY BLONDE BASTARD?
LOOKS LIKE I'LL GET MY CHANCE AFTER ALL.


BLAMMM!!!
SCHTHUNK!!
FUCK!!!

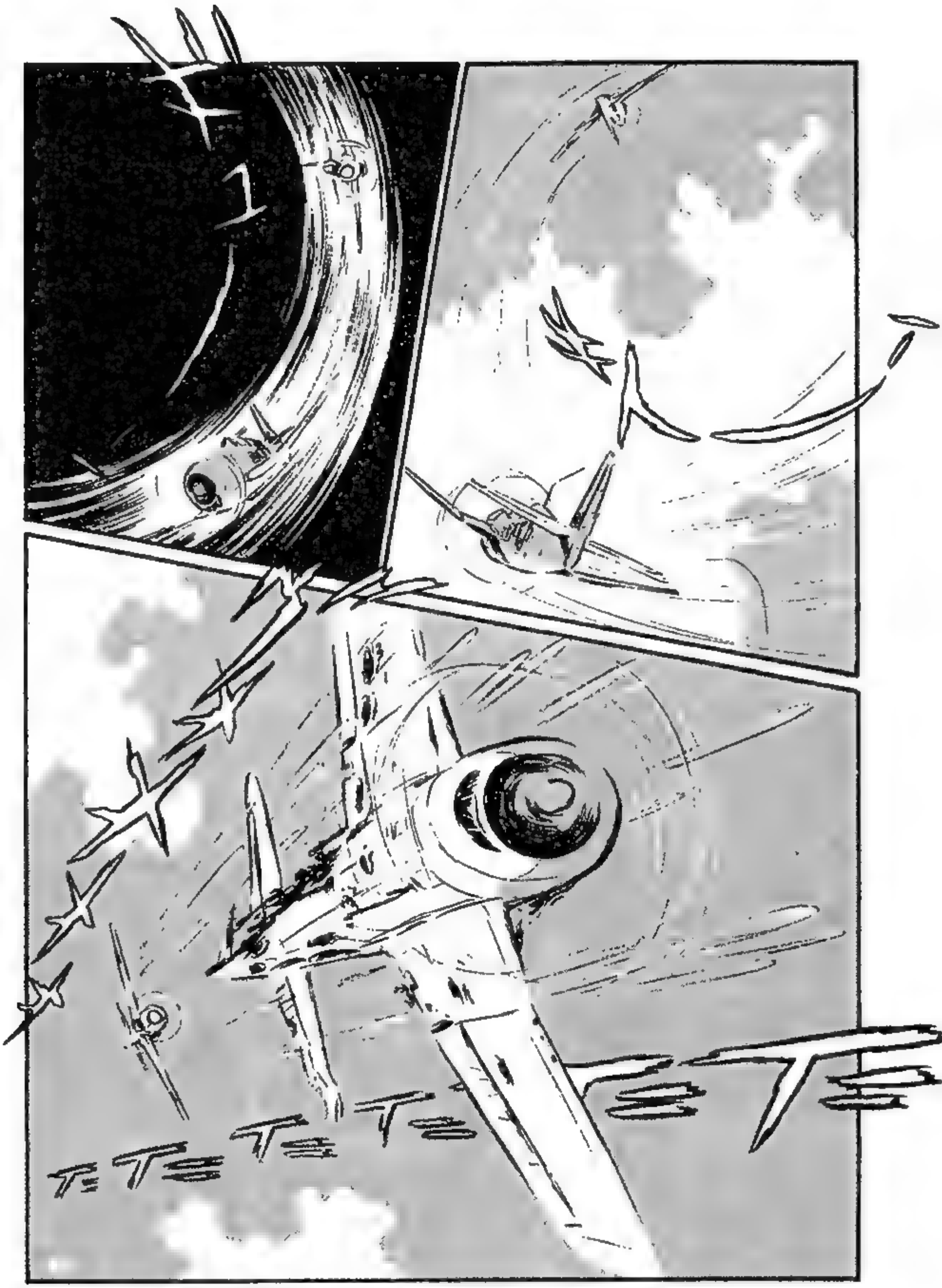
YEAH ....

DON'T THANK ME. JUST GET MOVING.

I'M ON HIM! THIS IS TOO EASY!

BURNSIDE, BURNSIDE, THIS IS SHARPS! SINGLE JAP HIGH AND ON YOUR RIGHT!!

BURNSIDE, COME BACK! THAT'S NOT AN OSCAR OR A ZERO YOU'RE DEALING WITH! IT'S THE NEW FRANK! HE'S FASTER AND MORE MANEUVERABLE THAN YOU!



I TOLD YOU NOT TO TANGLE WITH THAT FRANK! AW, DAMN! GOTTA SAVE MY OWN ASS NOW! HOME PLATE, THIS IS BURNSIDE! REQUEST ....

SHARPS, THIS IS BURNSIDE! I'M ALL SHOT UP!! I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BAIL OUT!!!

KLIK-KLAK!

SCHLAK!!

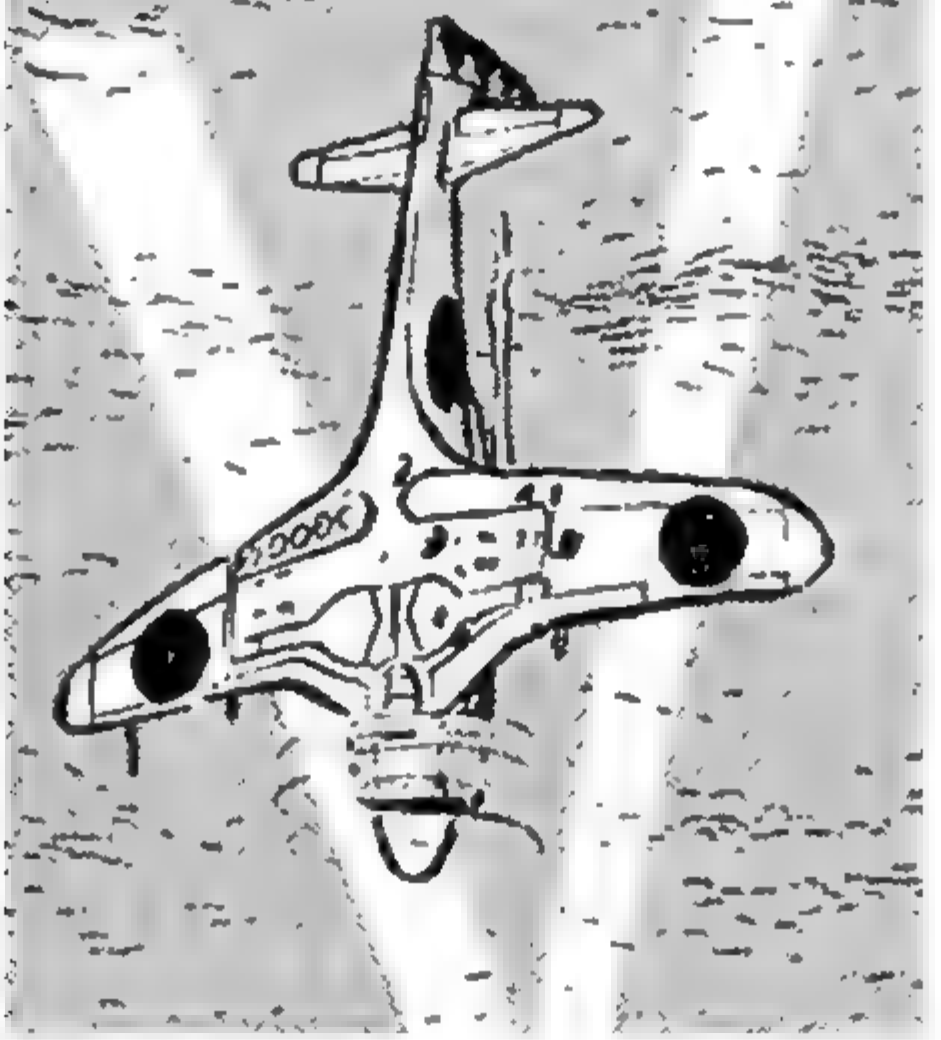
POW!!

<Published in Weekly Shonen Sunday, Issue 10, 1973>

PILOT HUNTER

# TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

# HIGH ALTITUDE FIGHTER



THE NAKAJIMA KI-44 SHOJI, ALLIED CODE NAME "TOJO," WAS DESIGNED AS A FAST CLIMBING, HIGH ALTITUDE INTERCEPTOR. IT WAS FITTED WITH A 14 CYLINDER RADIAL AIR COOLED ENGINE CAPABLE OF GENERATING 1450 HORSEPOWER. IT COULD GO FROM ZERO TO ITS MAXIMUM AIRSPED OF 605 KM/H IN ABOUT 5 MINUTES. IT WAS THE ONLY DEFENSE AVAILABLE WHEN THE B-29S FIRST CAME ....

APPARENT HEADING IS FOR TOKYO! HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY IS IN DANGER!

CONFIRMED! ENEMY B-29S SIGHTED ON APPROACH VECTOR!

IT'S SO DARK I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING UP OR DOWN!!

WHERE ARE THEY, BIG BROTHER?

(*) THE ACTUAL TITLE IS "STRATOSPHERIC FIGHTER" I CHANGED THE NAME SO READERS WOULDN'T CONFUSE THIS WITH "STRATOSPHERIC AIR CURRENT" LATER ON, WHICH SHARES A SIMILAR TITLE AND IS BETTER KNOWN HERE IN THE WEST.

- R.M.

# HIGH ALTITUDE FIGHTER*

ME TOO BOSS! I CAN HARDLY SEE A THING!

誠

DON'T WORRY, KATAYAMA, I'VE GOT 'EM SIGHTED! THEY'RE UP AND TO THE LEFT OF US!! LET'S DO IT, EVERYONE!!!

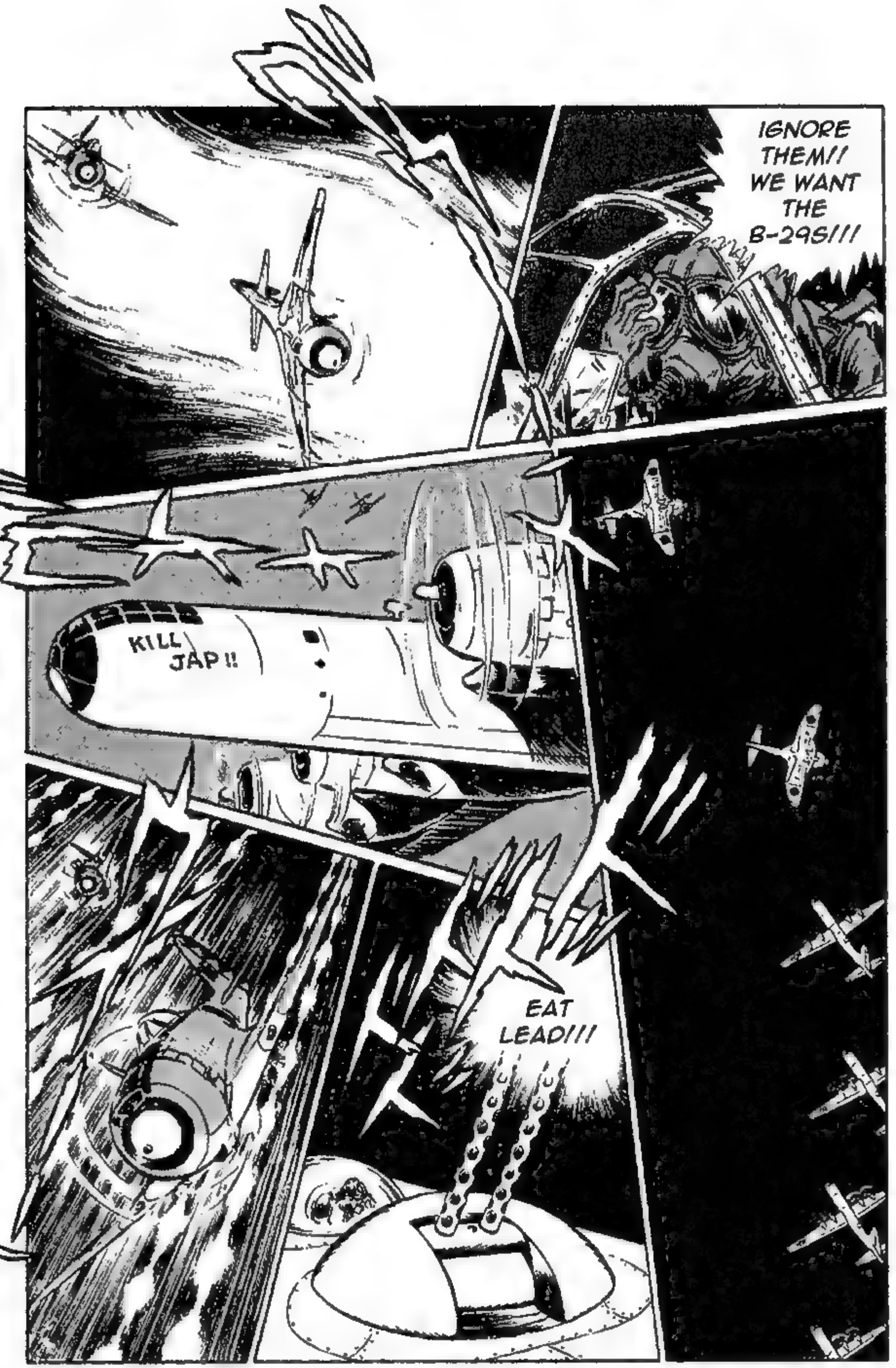
DROP TANKS AND CLIMB!
YES SIR!
DON'T FORGET THIS WORKS BOTH WAYS. THEY CAN'T SEE US EITHER. GET YOUR NOSE UP, JINSU!
I'M GLAD YOU KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, BOSS!
WE'RE ABOVE THEM NOW.
THERE! DOWN AND TO YOUR LEFT!
GOOD GOD, THERE'S AT LEAST THIRTY OF THEM, MAYBE FORTY OR MORE!

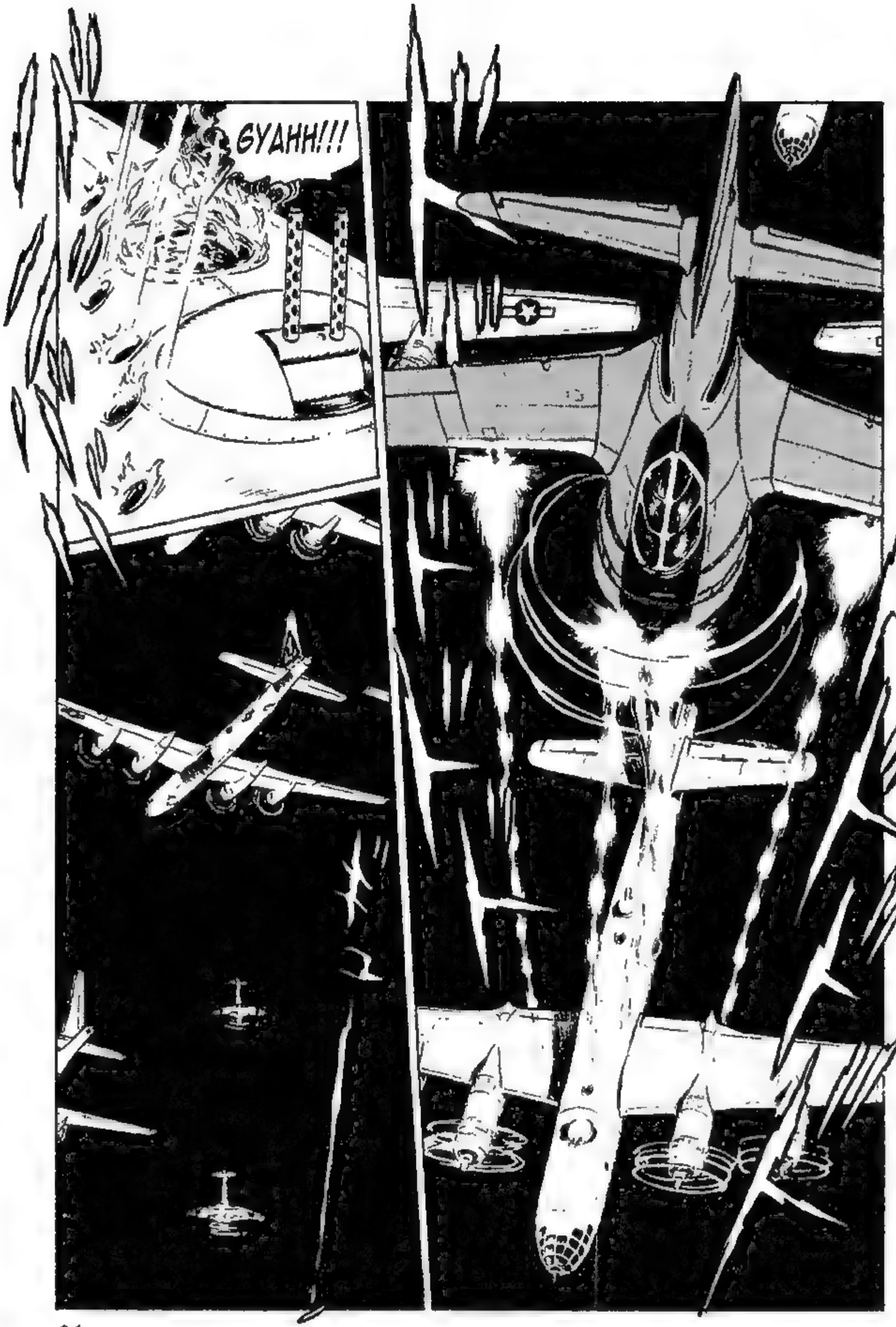
LET'S KNOCK DOWN AS MANY AS WE CAN PEOPLE!

YES SIR!

BANDITS! BANDITS! MUSTANGS COMING FROM THE RIGHT!!

SIR, THIS IS TOO--


IGNORE THEM!! WE WANT THE B-29S!!!
KILL JAP!!
EAT LEAD!!!


GYAHH!!!

ALL THOSE PEOPLE BELOW ARE COUNTING ON US!

WE NEED TO GET MORE THAN JUST ONE, FOLKS!

AT LEAST WE GOT THE ONE, BOSS!

DAMN, BUT THAT GUNFIRE'S THICK!

EVERYONE FORM UP ON ME! TIME FOR ANOTHER PASS!!

BOSS! LONE MUSTANG!!

DAMMIT! OUR ENGINES CAN ONLY GET US UP HERE! THEIRS DO MORE!

THAT'S THE B-29 THAT'S BEEN LEADING THESE DAMN RAIDS! I'D KNOW THOSE MARKINGS ANYWHERE!

MISS ENOLA TO FLOCK, WE'VE GOT A TOJO PLAYING TAG WITH US!

THERE YOU ARE!

(*) - THE KAWASAKI KI-45 TORYU TWIN-ENGINE NIGHT FIGHTER, ALLIED CODE NAME "NICK." ITS HEAVY CANNON WERE MOUNTED UPWARDS AND AT AN ANGLE TO HELP KNOCK DOWN BOMBERS.

TO YOUR RIGHT, BIG BROTHER!

AND THERE'S KATAYAMA. WE'RE IT?! WE'RE ALL THAT SURVIVED?!!

LITTLE BROTHER, ARE YOU STILL THERE?

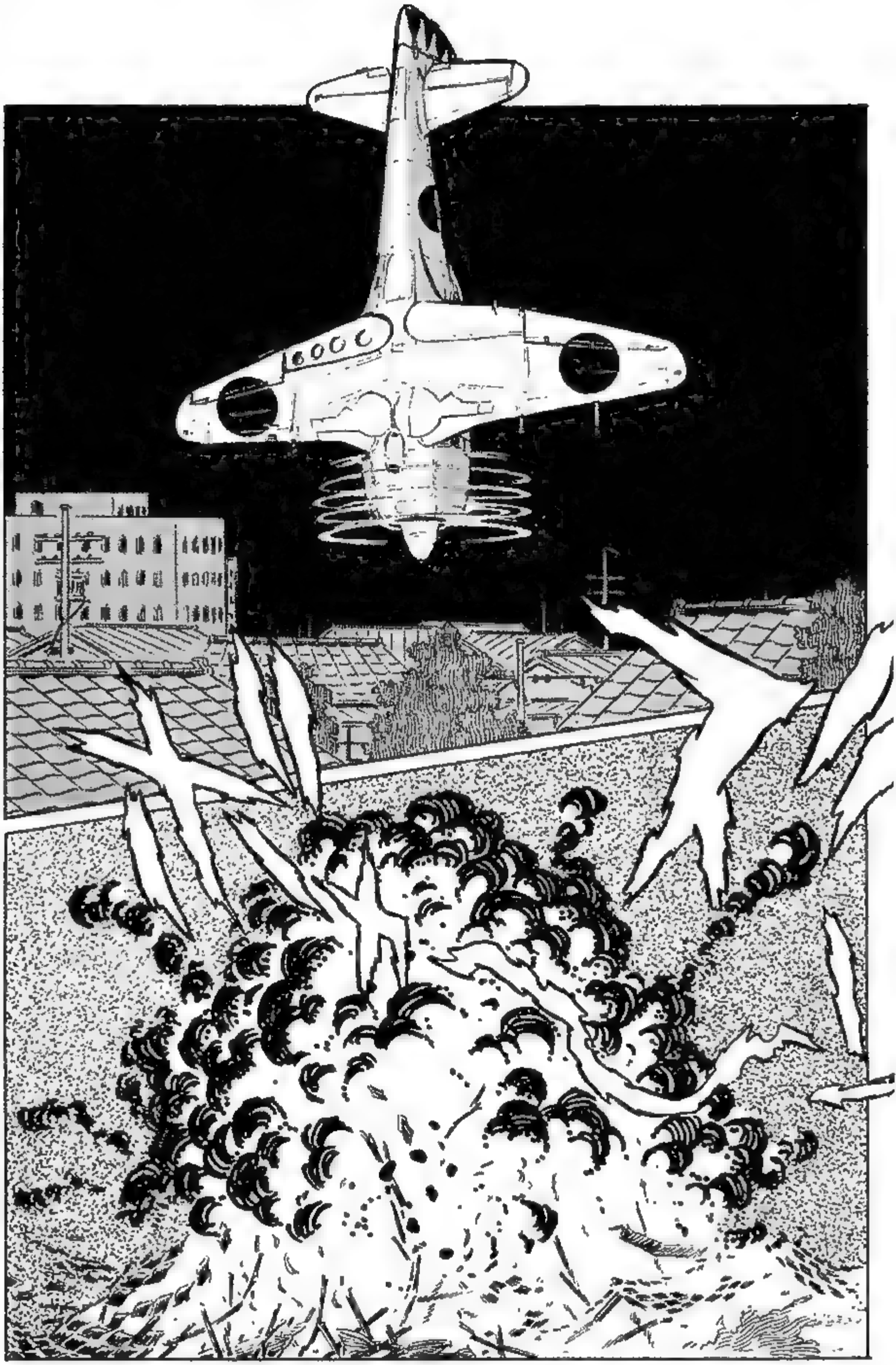
ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'LL GET YOU ...

AND LET'S NOT FORGET YOU, "MISS ENOLA," YOU BIG BITCH.

SIR!! BANDITS DIRECTLY BEHI--

YAAAHH!! BIG BROTHER!!

NO!!
NO!!!
DOOR



KNOCK IT OFF, BLUE GOOSE! WE'RE HERE TO DO A JOB, NOT FOR YOU TO GET YOUR SICK JOLLIES!

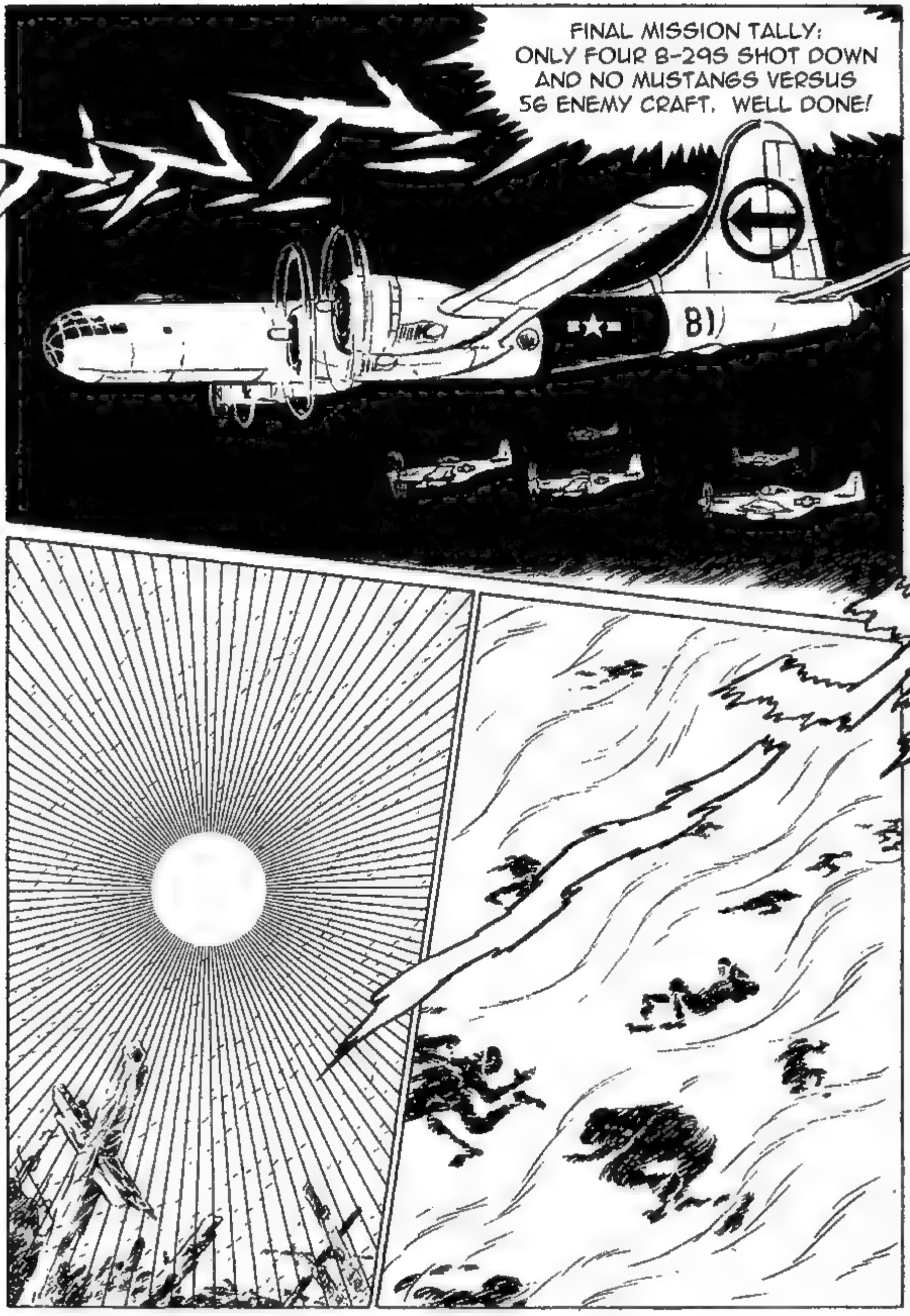
BOY, LOOK AT THOSE BASTARDS BURN! I BET WE TORCHED EVERY FUCKIN' JAP DOWN THERE!

THEY BUILD MOST OF THEIR STUFF OUT OF WOOD, SO WHEN WE BOMB 'EM ...

I HATE IT WHEN SOME OF US TALK LIKE THAT. PEOPLE ARE BURNING TO DEATH DOWN THERE.

MISS ENOLA TO FLOCK. OUR JOB'S DONE. LET'S HEAD BACK TO THE BARN.

YOU KNOW, THE JAPS ARE AS GOOD AS US IN A LOT OF THINGS. YOU'D THINK THEY'D HAVE COME UP WITH A BETTER WAY OF DEALING WITH US BY NOW.


FINAL MISSION TALLY:
ONLY FOUR B-29S SHOT DOWN
AND NO MUSTANGS VERSUS
56 ENEMY CRAFT. WELL DONE!
B1

WHERE ARE THEY? WHERE?! WHERE?!!
THEY TOLD ME THIS IS WHERE HIS PLANE HIT.
WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP THEM?! EVERYONE DIED! BURNED ALIVE! MY FAMILY!! MY ENTIRE FAMILY, BURNED ALIVE!!!
WE WERE.
HEY! YOU TWO ARE PILOTS! YOU MUST HAVE BEEN UP IN THE AIR LAST NIGHT!
LITTLE BROTHER ....

MY CITY! MY WARD!! MY HOUSE!! MY FAMILY!! MY LITTLE GIRL!!!!

I WAS AWAY! WHEN I CAME BACK, I CAME BACK TO THIS! TO THIS!!

I CAN'T FIND THEM! THEY'RE BURNED UP! ALL THE WAY!! IT'S AS IF THEY NEVER EXISTED!!!

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF THEM!!!

I MAY AS WELL GRAB ANY OLD HANDFUL OF ASHES!!!

SIR.

OR US DOWN HERE?

YOU AND YOUR SAMURAI CODE AND ALL THAT ... WHAT GOOD DID IT DO YOU UP THERE?

IT'S ... IT'S ...

LITTLE BROTHER .....

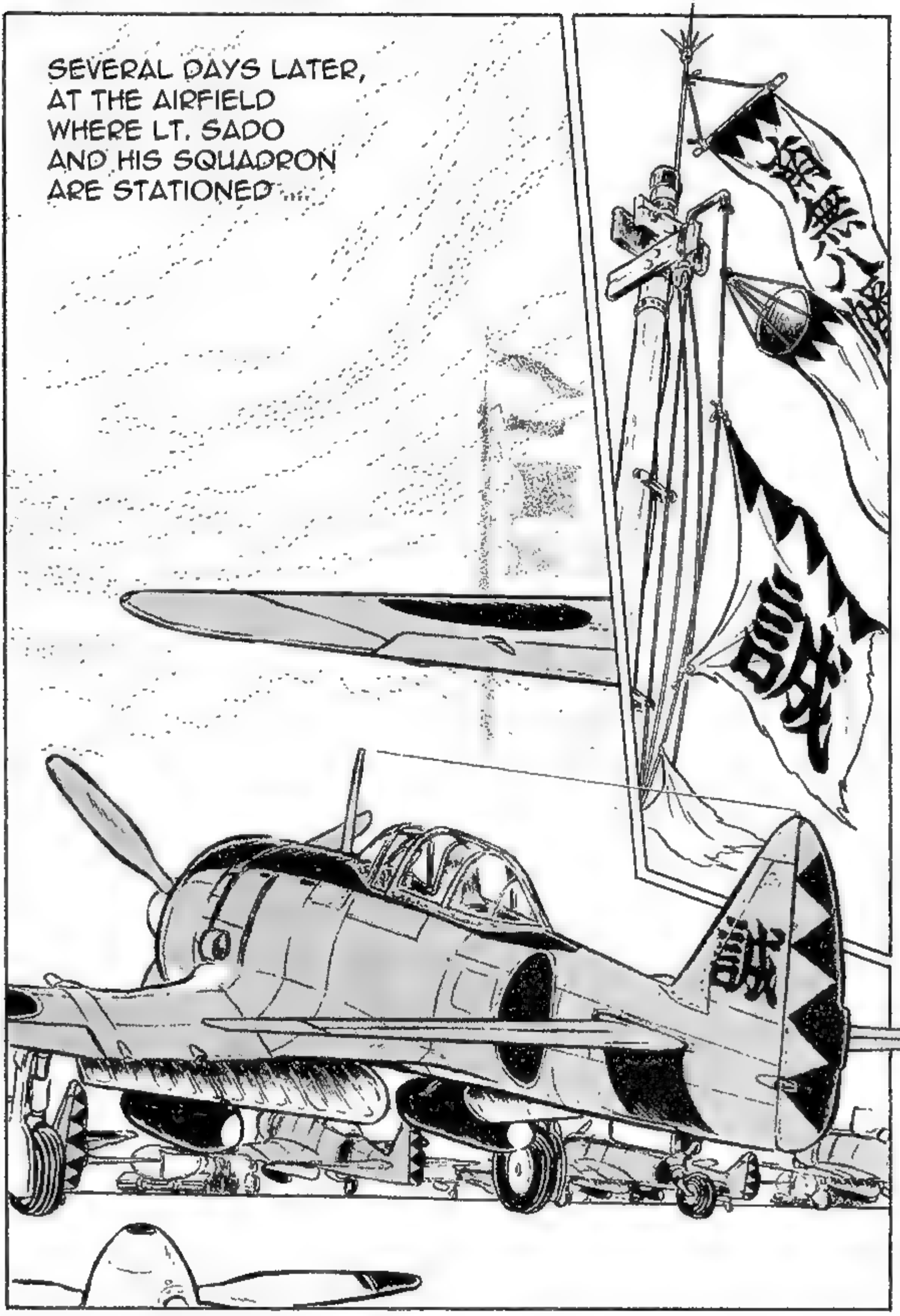
OTHERS LOST LAST NIGHT TOO, SIR EXCUSE US PLEASE.

THEY MUST HAVE FOUND THE CREW.

THERE'S ONE OF THEM ... AND LOOK AT THOSE PEOPLE.

THEY SAID WE ONLY SHOT DOWN FOUR OF THOSE B-29S.

ME NEITHER.
URGH ... BUT I CAN'T REALLY BLAME THEM. THEY LOST EVERYTHING.


SEVERAL DAYS LATER, AT THE AIRFIELD WHERE LT. SADO AND HIS SQUADRON ARE STATIONED...

... AND 4 MORE AND 6 NAVY PLANES ON THE WAY OUT.

IN ADDITION TO THE 56 WE LOST, THEY SHOT DOWN 12 MORE AND A NAVY PLANE ON THE WAY IN ...

'BOUT TIME. OUR OLD ONES COULD BARELY SCRATCH A B-29.

WE'RE NOT GETTING NEW ENGINES, BUT WE'RE GETTING NEW BIGGER GUNS.

THE PACIFIC IS AN AMERICAN LAKE NOW. WE CAN'T TAKE A SHIT OUT THERE WITHOUT BEING SHOT.

... SPOTTERS SAID SIX MORE HAD TO DITCH FROM DAMAGE, BUT THEY RECOVERED ALL THE CREWS.

WELL, IN ADDITION TO THE FOUR B-29S WE SHOT DOWN ...

THAT'S TERRIBLE. WE CAN'T LAST FOR LONG WITH NUMBERS LIKE THOSE. WE'VE GOT TO DO BETTER!

LET'S JUST HOPE THESE NEW GUNS LET US DO BETTER.

WE'RE KEEPING OUR 127MM WING MACHINE GUNS FOR DOGFIGHTS AND SUCH ...

HERE'S WHAT'S CHANGED.

THANKS. KATAYAMA, BEHOLD THE NEW SHOJI.

WE'RE DONE, SIR. IT'S ALL YOURS.

WE'RE NOW FITTED WITH THE NEW HO-301 40MM CANNON.
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE THE FIRST UNIT TO GET THIS MOD.
BUT THEY REPLACED OUR MAIN CANNON!
YOU MEAN "MISS ENOLA," RIGHT? THE ONE THAT ALWAYS LEADS THE B-29S?
AND I KNOW ONE B-29 IN PARTICULAR I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO USING IT ON.
... FOR THOSE B-29S, GIVEN OUR ENGINE LIMITS.
IT DOESN'T HAVE THE RANGE OF OUR OLD 20MM BUT IT PACKS A FAR HEAVIER PUNCH. JUST WHAT WE NEED ...
THAT'LL EVEN THE ODDS ... AND GIVE ME MY CHANCE AT REVENGE.
THAT'S THE ONE THAT DIRECTS THEIR FIGHTERS. THEY'LL BE ON THEIR OWN IF IT'S TAKEN OUT.
IF WE CAN GET THAT ONE IT'LL BE LIKE CUTTING THE HEAD OFF OF A SNAKE.
LET'S DO IT!!!

IF WE CAN GET THAT, THEN INDISCRIMNATE BOMBING OF INCIDENTAL TARGETS WILL BE PERMITTED!

MISS ENOLA TO FLOCK! MISS ENOLA TO FLOCK! REMEMBER, OUR TARGET TODAY IS THE NAKAJIMA AIRCRAFT FACTORY AT MUSASHINO!

LARGE FLIGHT OF B-29S HEADING NORTHWARD TOWARDS TOKYO!

誠

DAYLIGHT RAID! TO YOUR PLANES!!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, EVERYONE! TODAY YOU CAN SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING, SO SHOOT STRAIGHT!!

THROTTLE UP EVERYONE! LET'S GET 'EM BEFORE THEY CAN MAKE TARGET!

I SEE THEM, BOSS!

DON'T FORGET THE PEOPLE BELOW!

BANZAI!!!!

YOU HEARD THE MAN!

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT OUT WORK CUT OUT FOR US!

MUST BE FIFTY OR MORE, AND WITH FULL FIGHTER COVER!

WHERE ARE YOU, MISS ENOLA?!
WHERE ARE YOU ... ?
BANDITS, BANDITS! ON TOP OF US!!

OH, BUT DO THEY WORK!

WHERE ARE YOU, WH--

YOU GOT HIM SIR!! Y--

GO ... GET ... HIM ...

THERE YOU ARE!!!

THAT'S TWO TO AVENGE.

KATA-YAMA!!

## HIGH ALTITUDE FIGHTER

SO YOU'RE GOING TO HIDE IN THE CLOUDS WITH FIGHTER COVER. HOW 'BOUT I SLIP IN UNSEEN WITH YOUR FIGHTERS?

MISS ENOLA

MISS ENOLA TO FLOCK, DO YOU SEE THAT JAP? HE WAS COMING UP AFTER US AND HE JUST VANISHED?

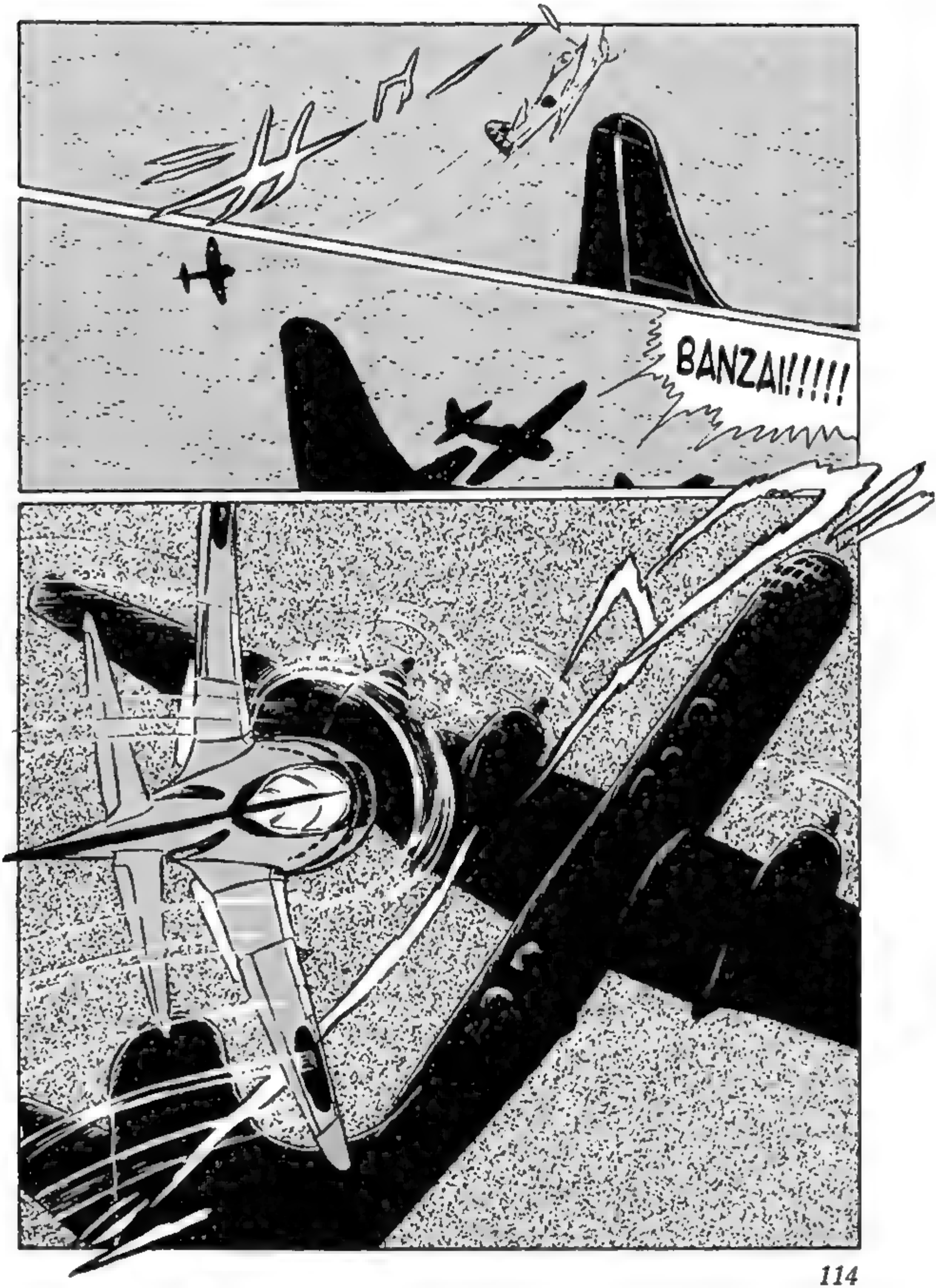
I LOOK ENOUGH LIKE A THUNDERBOLT* TO FOOL THEM ... FOR A WHILE ....

SIR! WHAT'S THAT P-47 DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR FORMATION?!

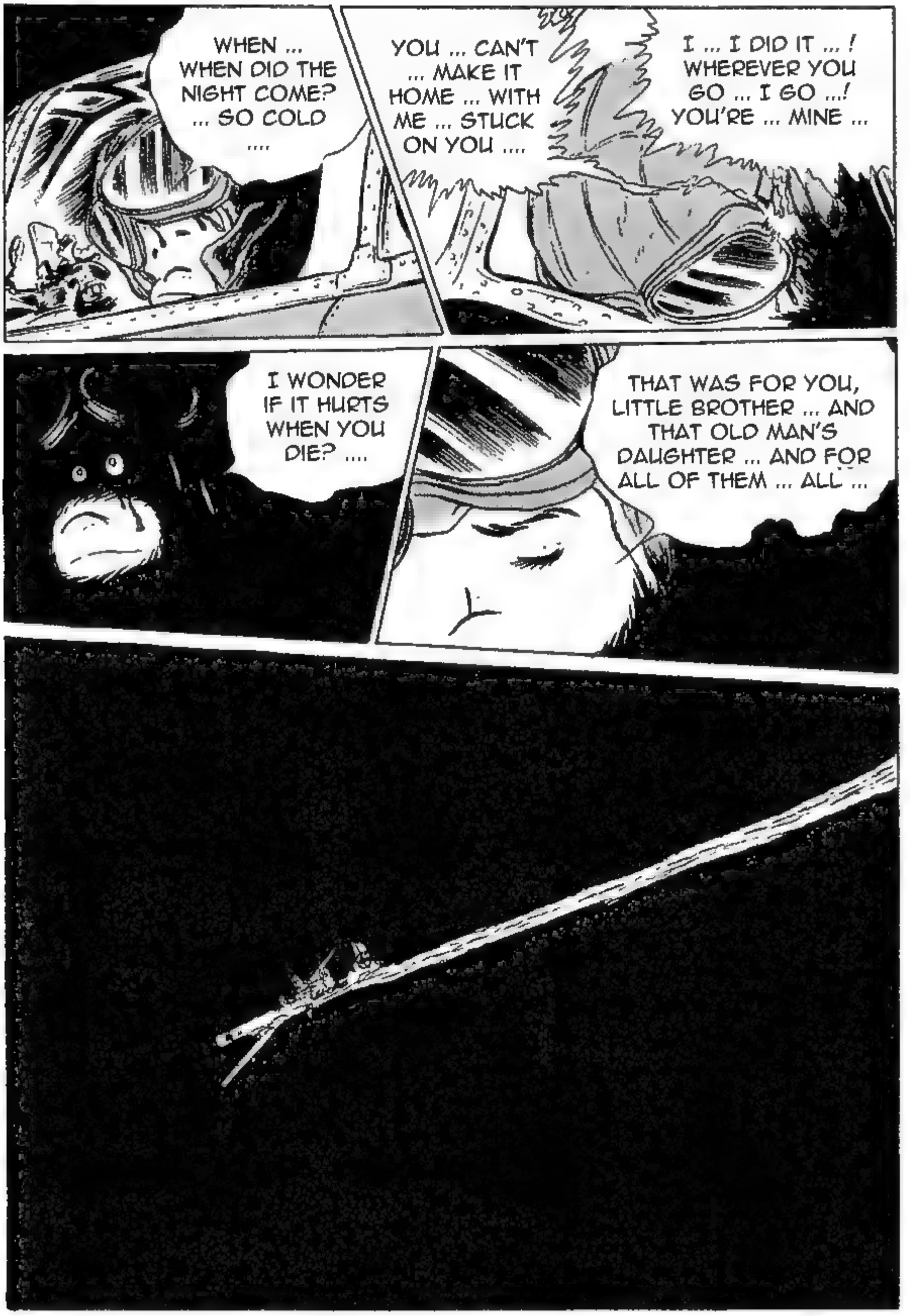
HUH?!

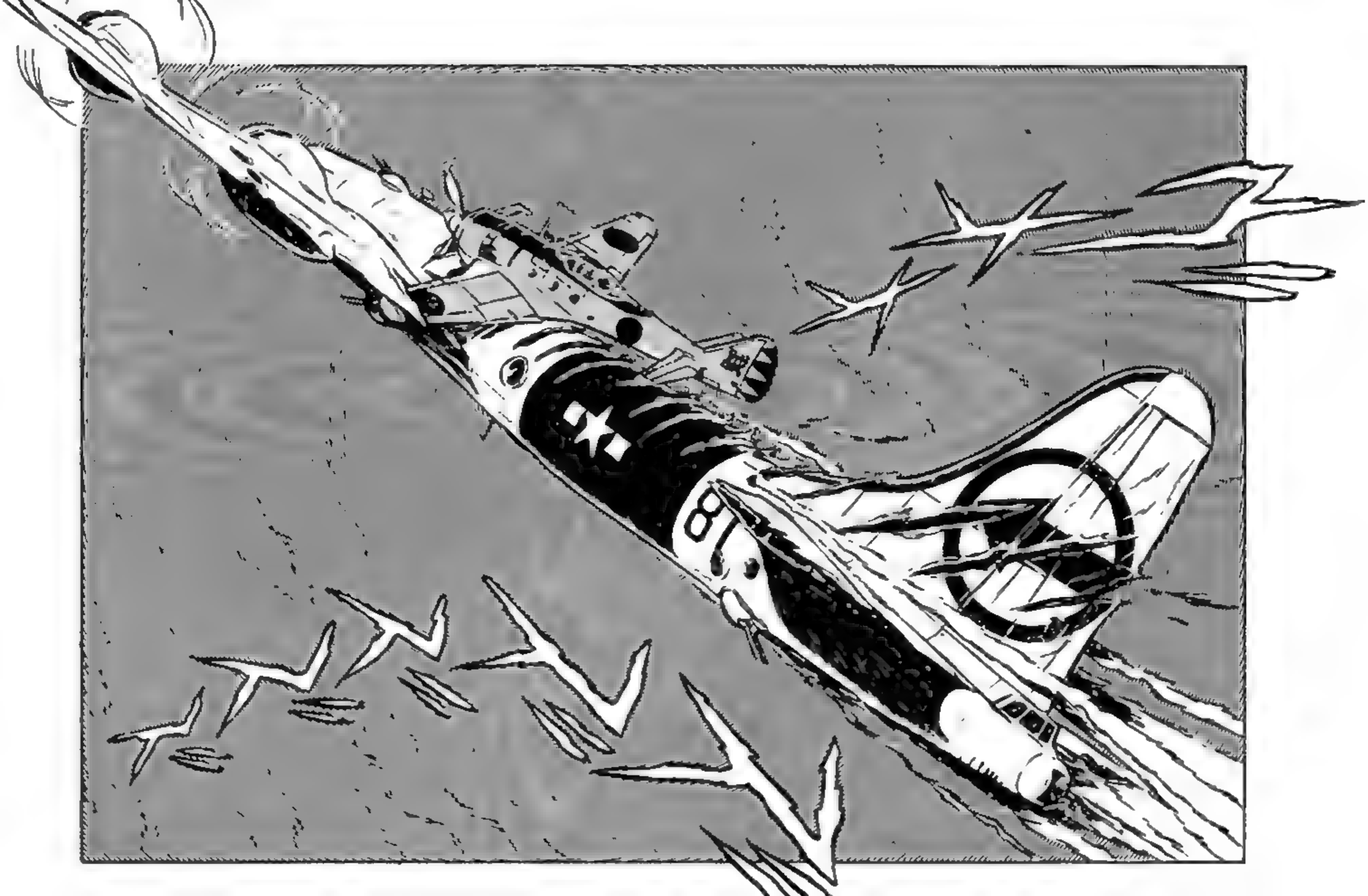
THAT'S NO P-47 YOU FOOL, THAT'S A GODDAMN JAP!!

 (*) THE REPUBLIC P-47 THUNDERBOLT, AKA THE "JUG"

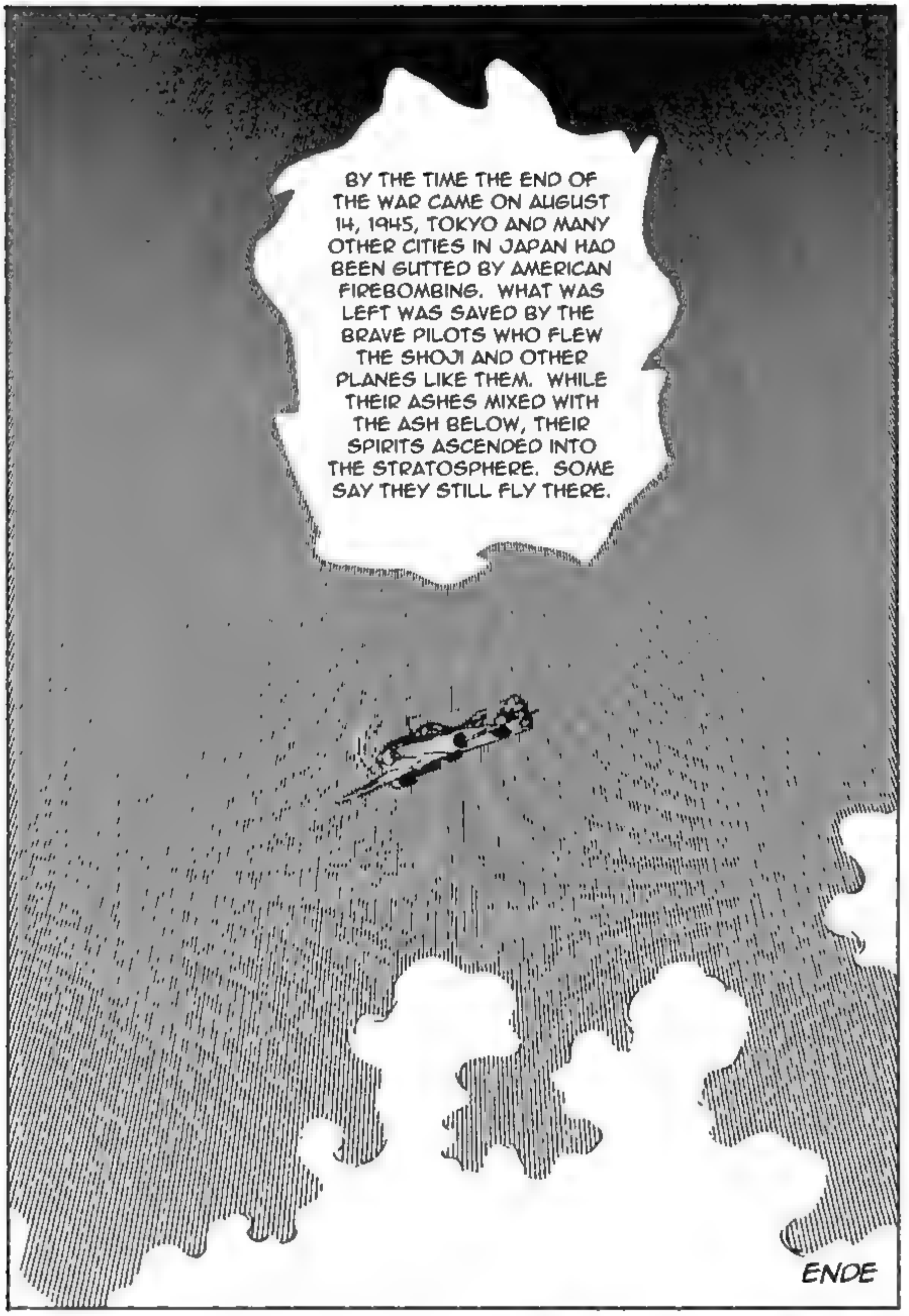

BANZAI!!!!!

HE CRASHED ON TOP OF MISS ENOLA!!
AND SHE CAN'T SHAKE HIM OFF!!


WHEN ... WHEN DID THE NIGHT COME? ... SO COLD ....
YOU ... CAN'T ... MAKE IT HOME ... WITH ME ... STUCK ON YOU ....
I ... I DID IT ... ! WHEREVER YOU GO ... I GO ...! YOU'RE ... MINE ...
I WONDER IF IT HURTS WHEN YOU DIE? ....
THAT WAS FOR YOU, LITTLE BROTHER ... AND THAT OLD MAN'S DAUGHTER ... AND FOR ALL OF THEM ... ALL ...



"MISS ENOLA" NEVER MADE IT BACK TO BASE. WHERE SHE CRASHED, NO ONE KNOWS.




<Published in Weekly Shonen Sunday, Issue 34, 1973>

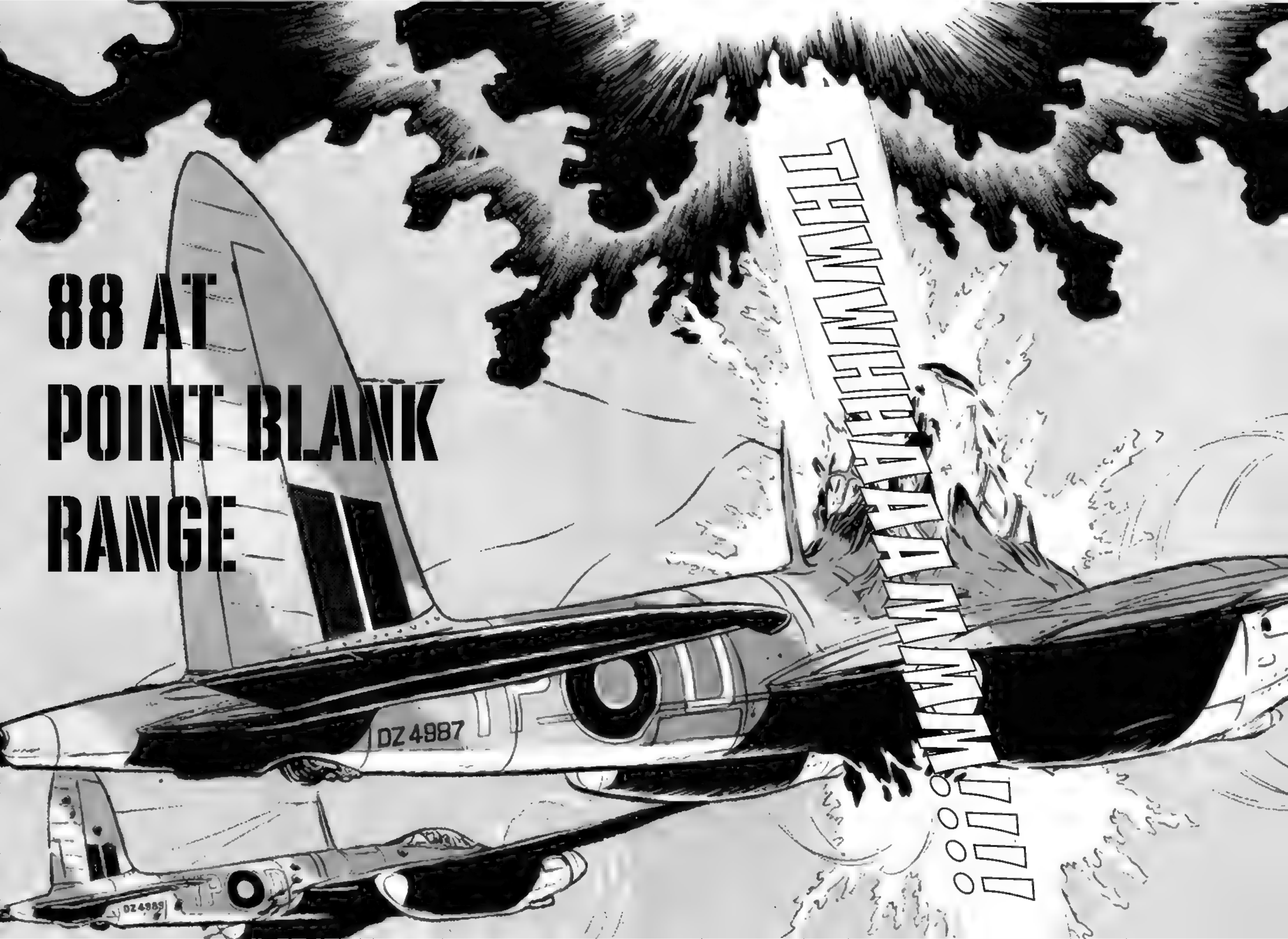
**HIGH ALTITUDE FIGHTER**

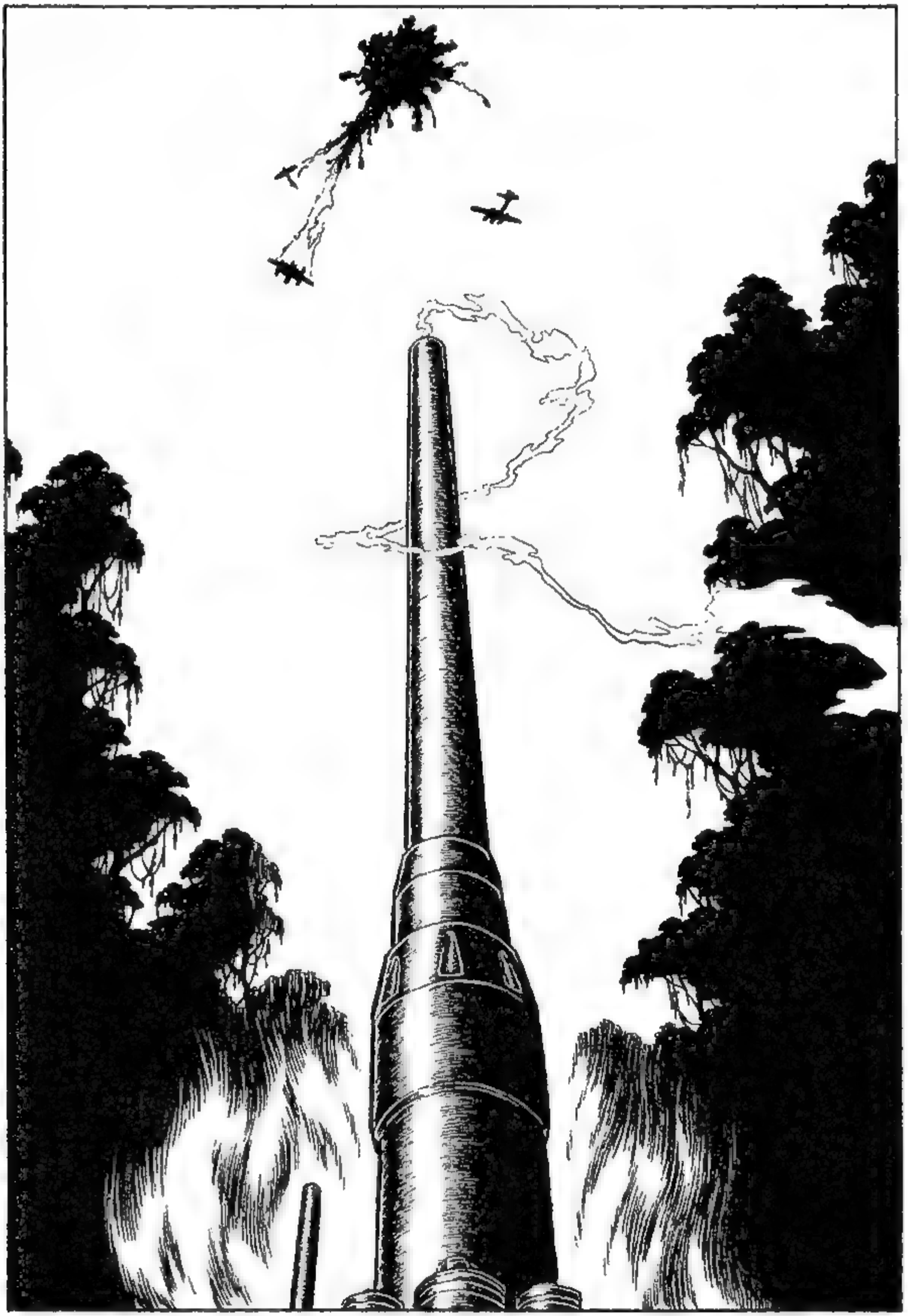
# TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

# 88 AT POINT BLANK RANGE

YOU KNOW, IN WARTIME THEY TEACH YOU TO SHOOT FIRST AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS.
OH, FORGIVE ME. I'M ARTHUR ADAMS TRENTER, A FORMER LIEUTENANT IN HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL AIR FORCE.
I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME HERE IN THE WAR. I ESCAPED DEATH SO MANY TIMES I BEGAN TO LAUGH AT THE THOUGHT, UNTIL THAT DAY ... UNTIL GEORGE DIED ....
ARTHUR, YOU'VE BEEN HIT! ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT BACK ALL RIGHT?
ALREADY ON IT, GEORGE. IT'S NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE. I'LL HAVE THEM LOOK AT IT WHEN WE GET BACK. BET I CAN STILL OUTRACE ANY JAP OUT THERE, NOT TO MENTION YOU. LAST ONE BACK BUYS THE SCOTCH!
YP
YPD
DZ4988

# 88 AT POINT BLANK RANGE





## 88 AT POINT BLANK RANGE

THEY'VE GOT A MOUNTED MACHINE GUN.

THE TOMMIES ARE BEHIND THAT ROCK ON THE RIGHT.

THEY'VE GOT A GRENADE LAUNCHER!!

EAT THIS!!

OH *HELL!* THEY'VE GOT AN AMERICAN TANK TOO! RETREAT!!

HEH-HEH-HEH ....

WHAT A MESS! WE USED TO BE AN ENTIRE DIVISION, AND NOW IT'S JUST THE THREE OF US!

JUST YOU, ME, AND YAMASHITA.

HOW MANY OF US ARE LEFT?

PLUS WE GOTTA KNOCK OUT THAT TANK OR THIS RETREAT'S GONNA TURN INTO A ROUT!

THAT WAS CLOSE!

SOMETHING I'VE LEARNED. EACH GUN HAS A DIFFERENT SOUND. KNOWING THAT DIFFERENCE CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE.

IT'S ONE OF OURS!

HEY, THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A BRITISH MACHINE GUN ....

THIS SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF OURS. I'LL BET IT'S A TYPE 99. YOU KNOW? THE ONES THEY MOUNT ON TANKS AND TRUCKS AND SUCH?

WHAT WE HEARD EARLIER WAS A BREN, OR BRITISH TYPE 95. GOOD GUN FOR WHAT IT IS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON FOOT, TANKER?
YOU GUYS HEAD ON. I'VE GOT YOU COVERED.
I'M COMING!
I GOT BLOWN OFF THE TOP WHEN THAT DAMN BRITISH TANK BLEW IT UP!
LUCKY GUY.

I KEEP IT AS CLEAN AS I CAN. THAT WAY IT NEVER JAMS.

THANKS FOR SAVING OUR ASSES BACK THERE. HEY, YOUR GUN IS IN GREAT SHAPE.

I'VE BEEN HELPING COVER THE RETREAT, SAME AS YOU.

BY THE WAY, I'M SUNIYAMA. HOWDY!

OH, IT GETS BETTER. THE BRITS ARE SEALING OFF THE KOKODA CORRIDOR WITH MORTARS. ONCE THEY DO WE'RE TRAPPED.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THAT TANK?

IT'S GOING TO BE NONE IF WE DON'T GET OUR BUTTS IN GEAR.

SO, IT'S JUST US FOUR AGAINST THE BRITISH, EH?

AND I'M . CORPORAL SAKATA.

I'M YAMASHITA.

I'M . PRIVATE ISHIKAWA.

WHADDYA MEAN LOOK AT ... OH, MY ....

HEY! WHAT'S THAT OVER ... UHH ... HEY, SAKATA? LOOK AT THAT!

MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST JOIN THE REST.

WE CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF ALONE.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? THAT AIN'T NO ORDINARY FIELD GUN!

IT'S A GUN!

I DIDN'T KNOW WE MADE GUNS THAT BIG, EXCEPT ON BATTLESHIPS AND SUCH.

PROBABLY THE SAME WHAT SHOT DOWN THAT PLANE EARLIER.

THAT'S A HEAVY AA GUN!!!

I HOPE THEY HAVE SOME RATIONS.

AND IT'S JUST WHAT WE NEED TO DEAL WITH THAT DAMN BRITISH TANK! LET'S GO!

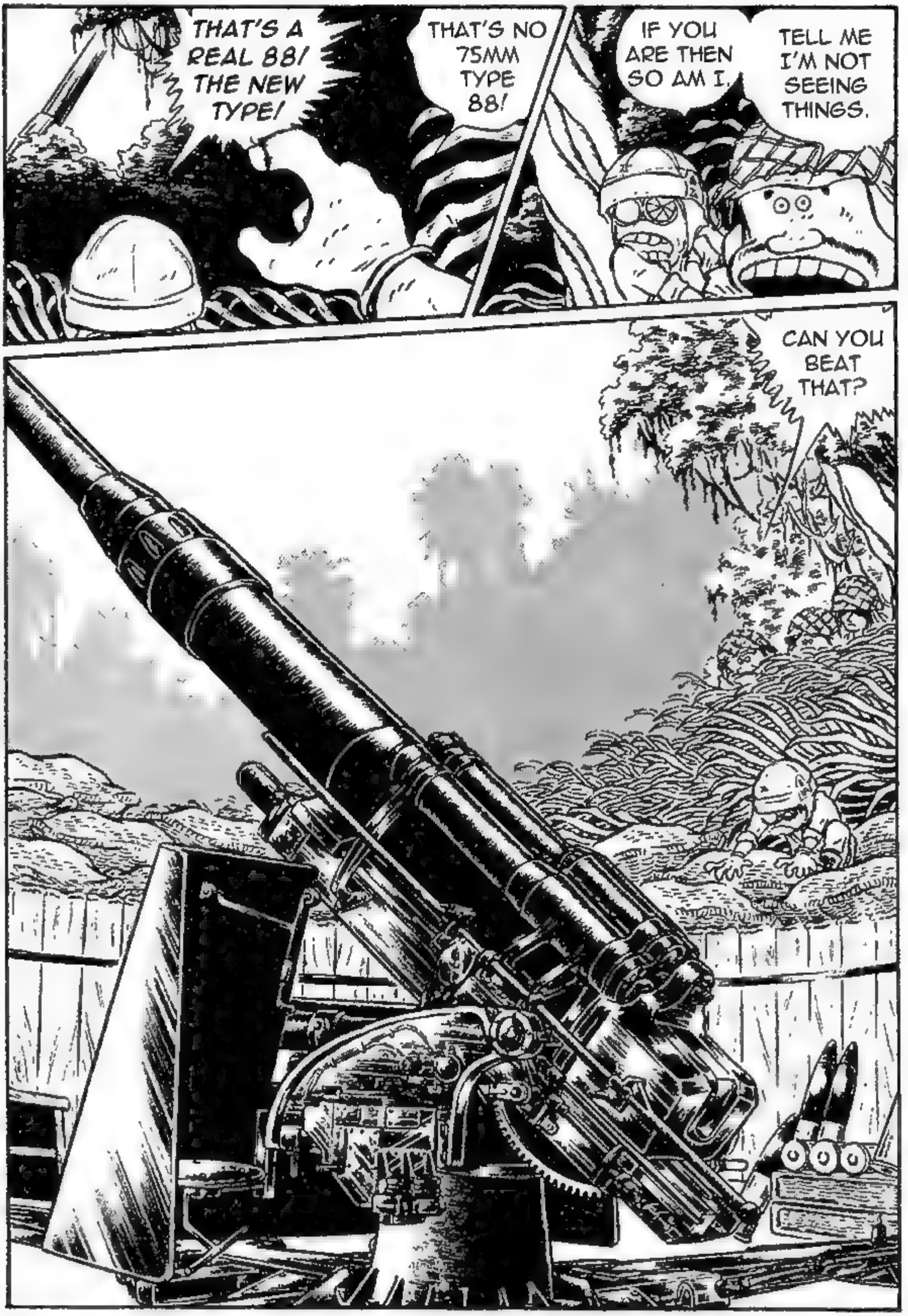
LET'S HOPE THAT GUN CREW'S GOT EXTRA

ME TOO. I RAN OUT BEFORE THAT TANK SHOWED UP.

YOU HEARD THE MAN! WHATEVER YOUR REASON, LET'S GO!

LET'S GO!

## 88 AT POINT BLANK RANGE






NOTE - MATSUMOTO IS TAKING SOME LIBERTIES IN MAKING THE "NEW TYPE 88" LOOK MORE LIKE THE FAMED GERMAN "88" THAN THE JAPANESE TYPE 99. HE HAD A THING FOR WORLD WAR II GERMAN MILITARY HARDWARE. (WINK)

I WONDER WHAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN DOING THAT WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ALL OF THEM KILLED?

THEY MUST HAVE GOT MOWED DOWN IN THAT LAST FIREFIGHT.

ALL SHOT UP.

LOOKS LIKE THE GUN CREW'S DEAD.

WHICH MEANS IF ANYTHING SETS IT OFF, THEN GOODBYE ALL OF US.

POOR BASTARDS. I'LL BET THE FUSE ON THAT THING IS STILL LIVE, TOO.

FUCK!!

HOW 'BOUT CLEARIN' THAT JAM UP THERE?

WE'VE GOT TO UNJAM THAT GUN IF WE'RE GOING TO USE IT AGAINST THAT TANK!

FOOD AND MEDICINE, GUYS!!

WELL LOOKIE HERE!

WE NEED SOME WATER TO WASH THIS DOWN!
OH MAN, IS THIS GOOD!
LET'S JUST HOPE IT DOESN'T COME BACK SOON!
HMM ...
WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT TANK WENT?
WHAT'S THAT?
SORRY. I'M THE SON OF A PHARMACIST. I CAN'T HELP IT. I'LL EAT LATER.
SUNIYAMA! QUIT MESSIN' WITH THAT MEDICINE KIT AND DIG IN!
WHATEVER. -NOM- -NOM- -NOM-
HOW 'BOUT I GO GET YOU GUYS SOME WATER? BE RIGHT BACK.
LET'S JUST HOPE THAT TANK DOESN'T FIND THEM -- AND US!
MAN, LOOK AT THAT.
I GOTTA PEE.

IF ONLY WE COULD DO SOMETHING FOR THEM! SOMETHING!!

THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY'VE EATEN IN DAYS.

IF THE GERMANS CAN USE "88S" AGAINST TANKS IN NORTH AFRICA THEN WE CAN DO IT HERE TOO!

UNJAMMING THIS GUN, FOOL! NOW GIMME A HAND!

WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU DOING?

I'M BACK WITH THE WATER AND-- HEY! GREAT IDEA, GUYS!

AND SINCE THAT DAMN M4 BLEW UP MY TANK, LET ME HELP YOU BLOW IT UP IN TURN!

OH COME ON, SAKATA! THIS IS CRAZY! YOU'RE GOING TO GET US ALL KILLED!

WE UNSTICK IT, VERY CAREFULLY, AND THEN LOWER IT DOWN!

AFTER THAT WE SANDBAG IT SO IT CAN'T BE MADE TO GO OFF!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT STUCK SHELL, SAKATA?

YOU DON'T WANT TO BLOW IT UP FROM THE OTHER END! THAT'S IT! KEEP GOIN' ...

ALL RIGHT! EASY! EASY DOES IT! JUST BE CAREFUL DOWN THERE!

MMMH! PLENTY OF SHELLS!

NOW!!

HERE COMES THE BIG PUSH BOSS!

ONE MORE OUGHT TO DO IT!

OH, FUCK!!!

TOO MUCH--

THOOMP!

IT'S DIRECTLY BELOW THE BARREL AND WE DON'T DARE MOVE IT AGAIN!

OF ALL THE ... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

WHUMP!

I SURE HOPE SO.

YOU GUYS DID A GOOD JOB.

IT'S ABOUT ALL WE CAN DO.

WHAT WE PLANNED IN THE FIRST PLACE. BUILD UP SOME SANDBAGS AROUND IT AND PRAY.

OH, ABSOLUTELY! M4 ARMOR CAN'T STAND UP TO AN "88!"

A LITTLE MORE ... THERE! THAT'S GOT IT! AND YOU'RE SURE THIS WILL TAKE THAT TANK OUT.

EVERYBODY DRINK UP WHILE YOU CAN!

AT LEAST NOW WE HAVE SOME SUPPLIES AND A BIG GUN TO BOOT!

NOW WE WAIT FOR IT TO COME BACK.

AND AS FOR YOU, BRITISH M4 SHERMAN TANK THAT KILLED MY TANK AND MY BUDDIES .... YOU'RE *MINE!*

THE ONCE PROUD JAPANESE ARMY, RETREATING BEFORE A SUPERIOR FOE.

AND SO OUR RETREAT CONTINUES.

HEY SAKATA, AREN'T YOU GOING TO HAVE ANY-THING TO DRINK?

SURE. I WAS WAITNG ON THE OTHERS.

BOTTOMS UP.

THIS IS THE TOUGH PART.

WAITING ... FOR WHAT YOU KNOW IS COMING.

BLAM!!!

IT'S THE TANK!!!

OVER HERE, YOU SHITHEADS!!

OH

NICE SHOT! READY ANO--

HEY, YOU'RE NOT DEAD! IT'S LIKE YOU JUST PASSED OUT! WAKE UP! OSHIKAWA!!

AWWW, SHIT!!!

OSHI-KAWA!!!

HEY ... WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?! SO SLEEPY .. CAN'T HARDLY FOCUS ... CAN'T ...
EVERYONE'S THE SAME! JUST PASSED OUT!
YOU ... SON OF A ....
YOU ... YOU DID THIS, DIDN'T YOU?! THAT MEDICINE ...
... BITCH. SORRY, BUT HE'S MINE.

WE'VE GOT 'EM ON THE RUN NOW! ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE A TANK AROUND!
LET'S MOP UP THE WHOLE BLOODY LOT!

... WHA ... WHERE ...

I'M MAD AS HELL, THAT'S WHAT I AM! FUCKIN' GOGGLE-EYED SUNUVABITCH!!

YOU'RE AT THE REAR, CORPORAL. THAT LITTLE TANKER GUY HAD US DRAG YOU AND THE REST OF YOUR MEN WITH US. SAID YOU WERE BAD OFF.

WHERE AM I, AND HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

HE SLIPPED ALL OF US MICKEYS!

IF I COULD JUST ... !!

SAKATA ... WHAT ... HOW ...

COM- ING. MEDIC!

PILLS IN OUR WATER!

A-HAH!!

WE GIVE THEM TO SOLDIERS WHO HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING.
LOOK LIKE SLEEPING PILLS, I'D SAY.
WHAT ARE THESE?
YOU MEAN HE'S BACK THERE ALL ALONE?!
SO THAT'S WHY HE KEPT FOOLING WITH THAT MEDICAL KIT!
"COME INTO MY PARLOR, SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY."
THAT'S RIGHT!!! A LITTLE CLOSER NOW ....
THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THEM LEFT! DON'T LET THE ENEMY FRIGHTEN YOU! WE CAN DO THIS! NOW MOVE!!
I KNOW WE SHOULDN'T BE KILLING EACH OTHER BUT THIS IS WAR!

LINE OF RETREATING JAPANESE SOLDIERS, 20 DEGREES, DISTANCE 200 METERS!

... HE'D BETTER HURRY!

WHATEVER HE'S GONNA DO ...

OH SH--!!

KA-POP!

OOOOM

HE GOT IT!!!
AND NOW ANOTHER FOR GO--
HOW'S THAT, TOMMY ATKINS?!!
SCHOHK!!!

NOT ...
RIGHT ...
AWAY ...
DIE YOU FUCKIN' JAP!!

KONK!!
KA-WHAM!!!

THE TYPE 99 88MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN WAS DERIVED FROM THE WORLD WAR I ERA GERMAN SK C-30 AA GUN, WHICH WAS ONE OF THE ANCESTORS OF THE FAMED "88." JAPAN HAD CAPTURED CHINESE OWNED EXAMPLES IN THE 1930S AND STUDIED THEM.

WHILE NOT AS FAMOUS AS ITS GERMAN COUSIN IT WAS NO LESS FEARED BY ALL WHO HAPPENED TO CROSS ITS PATH.

THE JAPANESE TYPE 99 QUICKLY PROVED ITS SUPERIORITY OVER THE LESS POWERFUL TYPE 75. EVENTUALY SOME 914 WERE BUILT.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, NEVER FORGET THAT BOTH GUNS OWED THEIR FAME TO THE BRAVE MEN WHO CREWED THEM.

ONE OF THESE PLACES WAS BURMA, WHERE TYPE 99S HIDDEN IN THE JUNGLES AND MOUNTAIN VALLEYS CAME AS NASTY SURPRISES TO BRITISH AND AMERICAN FORCES.

I AM ARTHUR ADAMS TRENTER, ROYAL AIR FORCE, RETIRED ... AND I STILL LIVE.

THE "88" I KNEW KILLED MY BEST FRIEND. AS FOR YOUR BROTHER'S ... WELL ... I PRAY IT'S A BETTER ONE.

... AND THAT'S HOW I LOST MY FRIEND GEORGE AND HELPED IN THE CLEARING OF BURMA BACK IN MY TIME. ALL BECAUSE OF AN "88."

MY LITTLE BROTHER READ MANGA. IT CALLED "88" TOO.*

JAL

DIFFERENT 88, YOUNG LADY. DIFFERENT TIME, DIFFERENT PLACE.

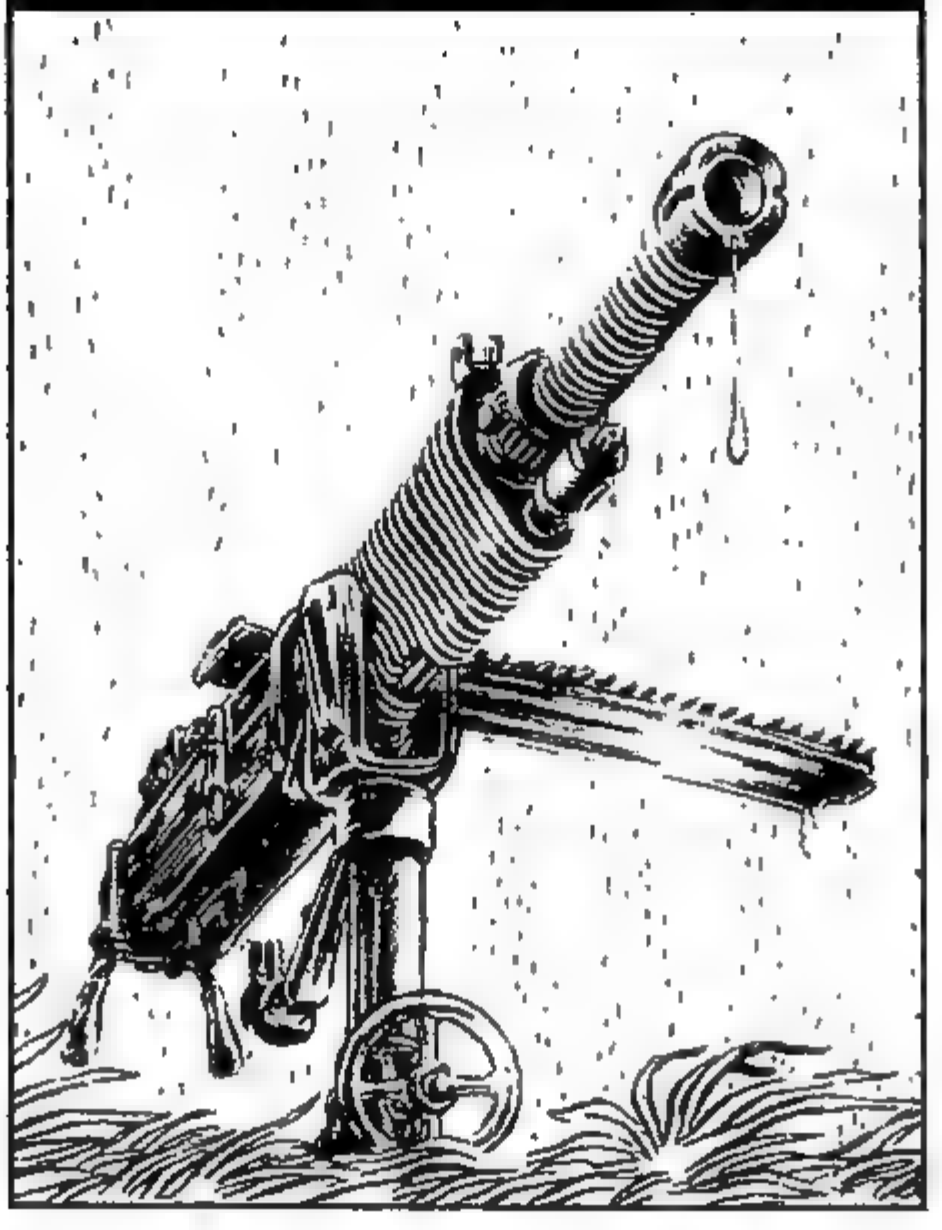
ENDE

(*) KAORU SHINTANI'S *AREA 88*

<Published in Weekly Shonen Sunday, Issue 8, 1974>

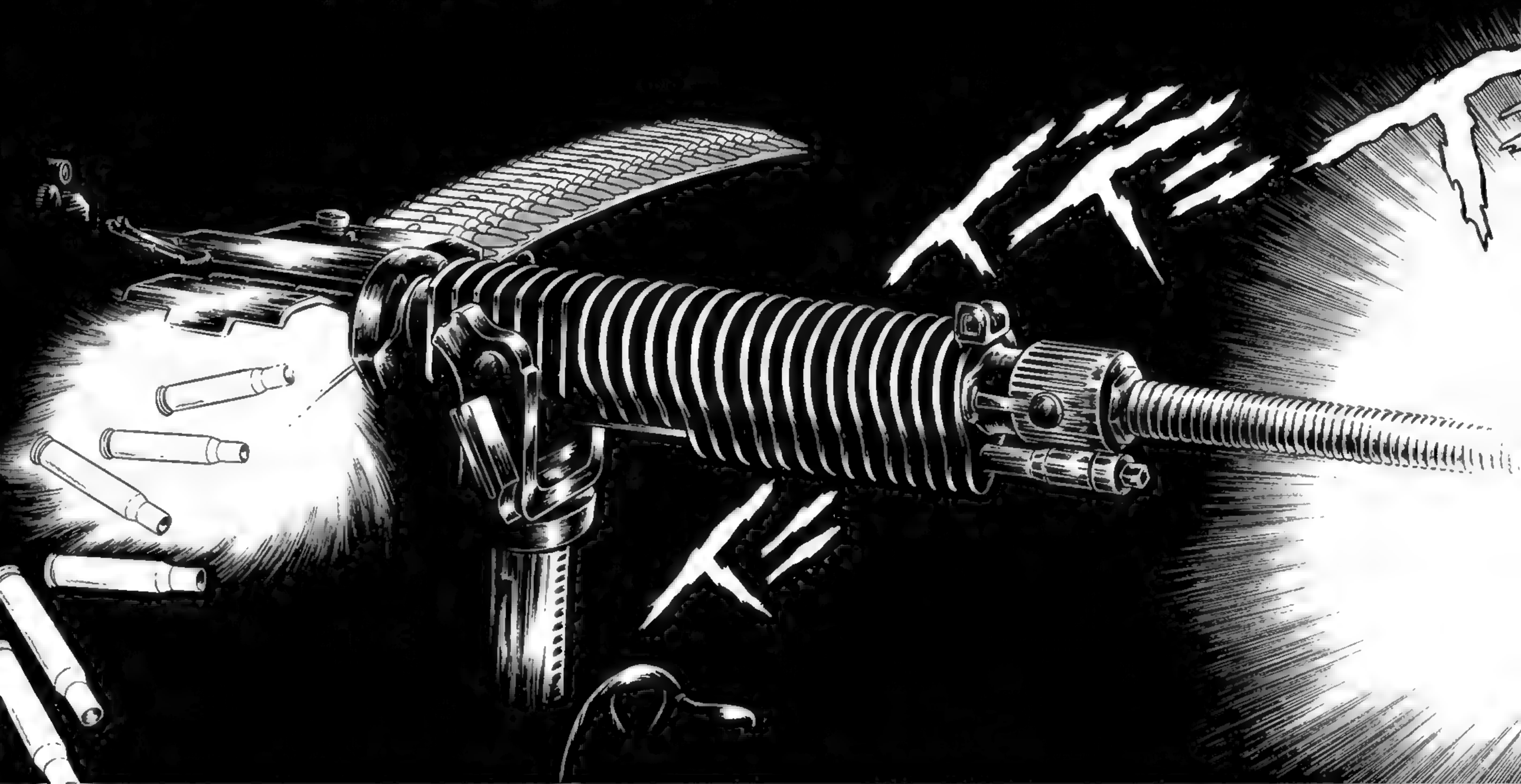
# TALES FROM THE COCKPIT

# INDEPENDENT MACHINE GUN UNIT



IN NEW GUINEA CAN BE FOUND THE BAGAYAN GORGE. IT HAS BEEN USED AS A GRAVEYARD SINCE ANCIENT TIMES. IT HAS EVERYTHING FROM SIMPLE GRAVES TO COMPLEX BURIAL CHAMBERS. IT HAS ALWAYS DEALT IN DEATH ...
A FLARE!
FA-WHOOMP!!
SHIT! THEY'VE SEEN US!!

# INDEPENDENT MACHINE GUN UNIT



YAAAAHHH!!!

I GET IT NOW.

WE GOT THE LOT. FIVE, NO SIX DEAD MARINES.

DID WE GET ALL OF 'EM, SAITO?

WE GOT PUT HERE BY H.Q. BECAUSE THIS CAVE COMPLEX COMMANDS THE ENTIRE VALLEY!

STILL, WE GOT EIGHT LARGE ROOMS AND PLENTY OF SUPPLIES FOR EVERYONE.

IF ONLY IT WASN'T SO HUMID! THIS IS BAD FOR ALL OUR GEAR.

THE ONLY REASON I'M IN CHARGE IS BECAUSE ALL OUR OFFICERS ARE DEAD.

STOW IT. I'M A GRUNT, SAME AS THE REST OF YOU. ONLY MY TIME IN WON MY STRIPES.

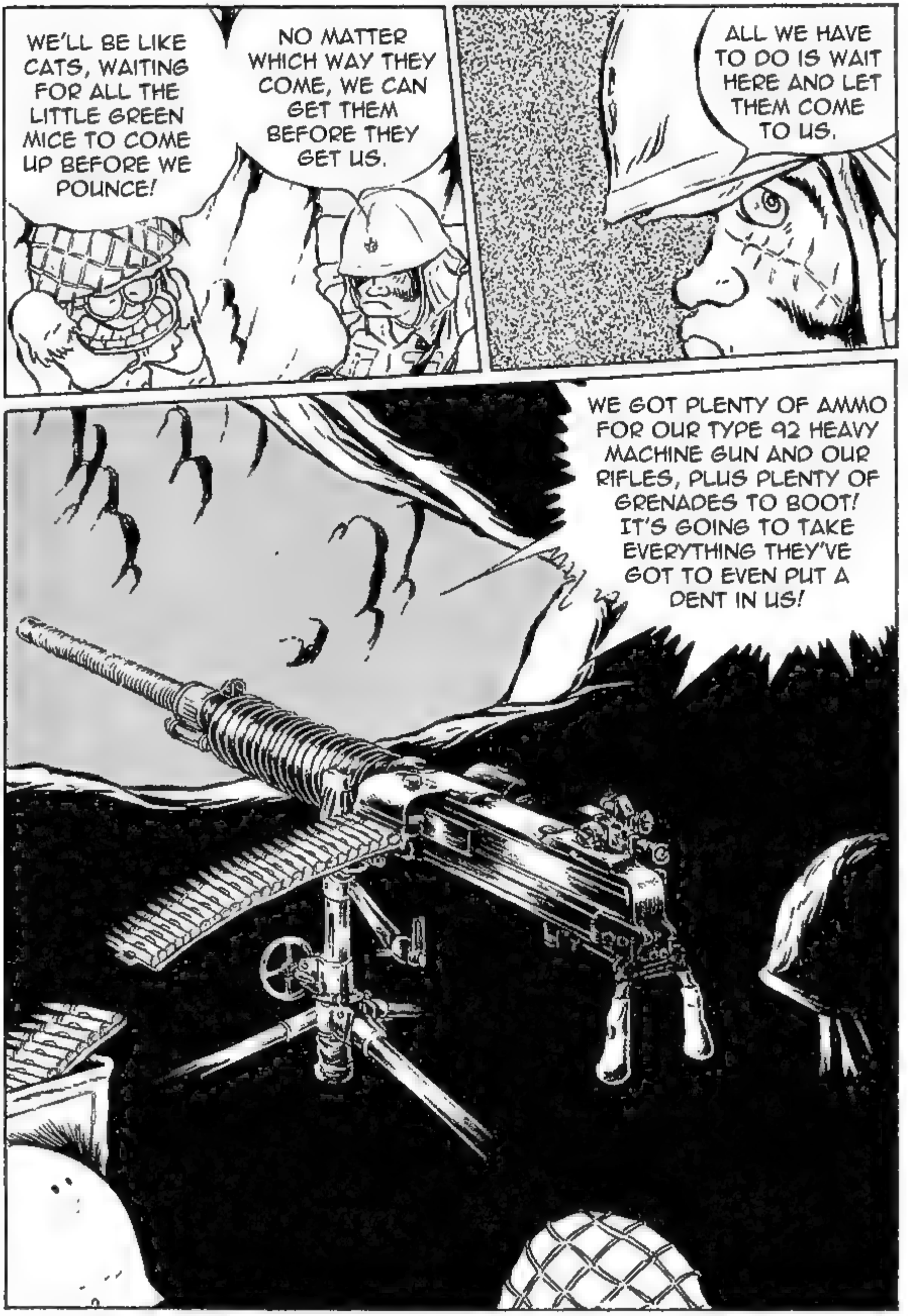
SO, SERGEANT SHIMADA, DO YOU LIKE BEING IN CHARGE?

WE'RE OKAY WITH IT.

WE GOT A JOB TO DO, SO LET'S DO IT.

IF YOU DO, AND I CATCH YOU, THEN YOU'RE DEAD.

AND YOU KNOW ME. DON'T ANYONE TRY TO SNEAK OFF.


WE'LL BE LIKE CATS, WAITING FOR ALL THE LITTLE GREEN MICE TO COME UP BEFORE WE POUNCE!
NO MATTER WHICH WAY THEY COME, WE CAN GET THEM BEFORE THEY GET US.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT HERE AND LET THEM COME TO US.
WE GOT PLENTY OF AMMO FOR OUR TYPE 92 HEAVY MACHINE GUN AND OUR RIFLES, PLUS PLENTY OF GRENADES TO BOOT! IT'S GOING TO TAKE EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT TO EVEN PUT A DENT IN US!

ON TOP OF THAT, THE WAY THIS GORGE IS SHAPED AROUND US MAKES US ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BOMB OR SHELL.

YEP. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT.

NAPALM THOSE LITTLE YELLOW BASTARDS, OVER!

OVER AND OUT!

I'M AT CHECKPOINT 45, MAP COORDINATES SW-38. STANDING BY TO DROP OUR EGGS, OVER.

60

60

IT'S A LITTLE PREVIEW OF HELL RIGHT HERE ON EARTH FOR THE LIVING.

YEAH, GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. I GOTTA JOKE ABOUT IT, YOU KNOW, KNOWING WHAT THAT STUFF CAN DO.

THEY'D PROBABLY BURN IT.

THINK THEY'D COOK THIS IF I SET IT OUT?

WHAT'S THE POINT? THEY CAN'T REACH US! ALL THEY'RE DOING IS BURNING UP THE BODIES OF THEIR OWN MEN!

THE AMERICANS ARE LIKE WOODPECKERS. THEY'RE GONNA KEEP TAPPING AWAY UNTIL THEY FINALLY FIND A WAY TO US WORMS.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
LET ME AT 'EM, SARGE!
CAN YOU DO IT?
TELL YOU WHAT. LET'S LET 'EM KNOW THAT THEY'VE FAILED ON THEIR NEXT PASS.
I'LL DO IT!
WE CAN'T SPARE MORE.
ONLY ONE FULL CLIP. 30 CHANCES TO SCORE A HIT.
NOW!!
A LITTLE CLOSER ... A LITTLE MORE ... ALMOST ...
COME TO ME, MY SWEET TARGETS!

KKA-CHOKKA-CHOKKA

CHOKKA-CHOKKA-CHOKKA-CH

I SWEAR I HIT AT LEAST ONE OF 'EM!

23 ROUNDS AND NOT ONE HIT?! I NEED TO SHOOT NEXT TIME!!

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I WON'T HOLD IT AGAINST YOU, SAITO.

POOH!

BRRNNN! BRRNNN-NNN-NNN...

I TOLD YOU I HIT ONE! SEE?!

THOONK!

A GRENADE! EVERYONE TAKE COVER!!

THIS HOLE WAS CLOSER. BESIDES, IT'S DEEP AND NARROW. ACTED LIKE A GUN BARREL AND DIRECTED THE BLAST UPWARD. NOW TO FIND WHOEVER THREW THAT THING.

WHY'D YOU DO THAT? YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST THROWN IT OUT!

GOT 'EM, SARGE!

DON'T WASTE OUR AMMO. WAIT FOR A CLEAR SHOT.

WANT ME TO SMOKE HIM OUT? MAKE HIM DANCE FOR US?

HERE, MOUSEY MOUSEY! HERE, MOUSEY MOUSEY! YELLOW CATS ARE WAITING FOR THE WHITE MOUSE!

NO MATTER WHAT HE TRIES TO DO, WE'VE GOT HIM.

HE CAN'T GO DOWN OR UP AND HE CAN'T THROW A GRENADE EITHER.

NOW OUR YANKEE FRIEND IS IN A FIX.

NO, LET'S LET HIM DECIDE WHAT WE'LL DO.

LEMME LOB A GRENADE AT HIM, SARGE!

I'M SO GLAD THIS PLACE HAS A SOLID ROOF. THAT BLAST SHOOK THINGS UP.

THE BRAVE COWBOY, PINNED BEHIND A ROCK DECIDING WHICH WAY TO RUN AND HOPING HE CAN OUTRUN THE ARROWS.

THIS IS LIKE AN OLD AMERICAN COWBOY MOVIE I SAW BACK BEFORE THE WAR.

HE'S GOT ONLY TWO CHOICES: GO AHEAD AND BRAVE OUR MACHINE GUN, OR GO BACK AND LET YOU NAIL HIM WITH A GRENADE.

... WHAT TO DO? ...

AND IF HIS BUDDIES TRY TO HELP HE'LL PROBABLY GET HIT TOO, BECAUSE ONLY IN THE MOVIES DOES FRIENDLY FIRE NOT KILL.

WELL I'VE GOT NEWS FOR HIM HE CAN'T OUTRUN OUR SHELLS ANY MORE THAN THAT COWBOY COULD ARROWS.

NOW!

I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR THE POOR SLOB.

GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. SAY SARGE, YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD WITH THAT. HOW MANY YOU KILLED?

DON'T. IF HE'D BEEN IN OUR SHOES THEN HE'D DONE THE SAME THING.

AT LEAST SEVERAL HUNDRED.

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW. LET'S SEE ... MANCHURIA ... BURMA ... NOW NEW GUINEA ...

THAT'S AN AWFUL LOT OF PEOPLE.

WELL ... THAT'S THAT.

THIS IS WAR. IN WAR ANYONE CAN DIE FROM ANYTHING. THIS LITTLE BABY HERE, FOR INSTANCE.

THE AMERICANS AREN'T WHOLESALE BUTCHERS EITHER, UNLESS YOU MAKE THEM. JUST LIKE US.

CORRECTION. *SOLDIERS*. I'VE NEVER SHOT WOMEN OR KIDS. I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

BESIDES, WE HAVE OUR SHAMEFUL THINGS TOO. I WAS AT NANKING. DIDN'T TAKE PART BUT I SAW.

I WASN'T DEFENDING THEM. I WAS BEING HONEST.

THEY AREN'T BUTCHERS? TELL THAT TO EVERYONE BEING FIREBOMBED BACK HOME.

THAT'S RIGHT ...

.... ....

AWWW, *SHIT!!!*

SORRY, SARGE. LIKE YOU SAID, ANYONE CAN DO ANYTHING IN A WAR. GOOD, BAD PREMEDITATED. WHATEVER.

THE BACK BLAST FROM THE ROOF MUST HAVE DONE THIS!

THAT BLAST FROM THAT GRENADE!

OUR WATER SUPPLY!

AND AMERICAN SNIPERS ALL OVER. YOU'D BE SHOT BEFORE YOU EVEN GOT CLOSE!

THERE'S A SPRING AND POOL UP TOP.

NO WATER?! YOU KNOW WE CAN'T LAST FOR LONG WITHOUT IT!

UHH, HE WENT UP TOP WITH A BUNCH OF CANTEENS TO GET SOME WATER.

WHERE'S SAITO? I DON'T SEE HIM.

LATER...

SARGE, I'LL GO COVER HIM!

HE'S GONNA GET KILLED TRYING TO PULL THAT STUNT OFF!

THAT DAMN FOOL!

AT LEAST IT'S DARK. THAT'LL MAKE US BOTH HARD TO SEE.

EASY DOES IT ...

MAYBE I WON'T FALL OFF THIS CLIFF.
MAYBE THE SNIPERS WON'T SEE ME.
HELLO, SWEET WATER!
PLEASE DON'T SHOOT! I'M A VOLUNTEER ARMY NURSE! PLEASE! I'M ON YOUR SIDE!
WHOA!!! A WOMAN!!! AND YOU SAY YOU'RE A NURSE?!
WHAT'S THAT?! WHO'S THERE?!!

AWWW, SHIT! THEY'VE SEEN HIM!
CAREFUL! NICE AND QUIET!

I'M ON IT!
THEY'RE BACK, AND THEY SAY MORE ARE COMING UP THE GORGE!
AWW, HELL! MORE COMING!

FUCK!!
ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HIM ARE HIS HANDS AND HIS HELMET!
A ...
A ...
AND STILL HE GOT 'EM ALL.

AND SHE'S GOT BLOND HAIR! SHE COULD BE AN AMERICAN SPY, SAITO!

OH, YOU NOTICED?

... A WOMAN!

MY NAME IS REIKO HAYA.

ALL RIGHT. GO!

AND I AM. PLEASE LET ME EXPLAIN.

SHE SAID SHE WAS ONE OF OUR NURSES.

SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

THE AMERICANS TOLD ME I WAS JAPANESE. THAT'S WHY I'M WITH YOU.

OH ... YOU'RE ONE OF THE HAIFU,* AREN'T YOU.

MY FATHER WAS AN AMERICAN. THAT'S WHY I HAVE BLOND HAIR.

(*) *HAIFU* – A JAPANESE LOANWORD, LIT. "HALF-BREED."

HOW MANY NIPS DID H.Q. SAY WERE IN THERE?

THEY'RE GUESSING A FULL COMPANY, JUDGING FROM THE FIGHT THEY'VE PUT UP.

THIS POSITION IS PERFECT, AND WITH MY GARAND SNIPER RIFLE IT'LL BE LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL!

OKAY, OKAY!

WATCH YOUR STEP, JOE! IF YOU KNOCK LOOSE A ROCK THE JAPS WILL HEAR IT!

WHAT TH--?! .. !!!

I SEE.

IT'S GONNA TAKE A WHILE FOR THIS WHITE MONKEY TO PICK OFF ALL THOSE LITTLE YELLOW MONKEYS, BUT IF THAT'S WHAT I'VE--

A NAKED WOMAN!

WHAT IS IT, JOE?

I KNOW, AND THANK YOU. I JUST WANTED TO SHOW YOU THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE. I AM JAPANESE DESPITE MY BLOND HAIR, AND I'LL BE JAPANESE UNTIL I DIE.

PLEASE PUT YOUR CLOTHES BACK ON, MISS HAYA. WE DIDN'T ASK YOU TO PLAY COMFORT WOMAN FOR US.

WHO'D-A THOUGHT IT?

A STRIP TEASE ... ALL THE WAY OUT *HERE*?!?!

NOW WOULD YOU PLEASE GET DRESSED AND UNDER COVER? YOU MIGHT GET SHOT!

THANK YOU, ALL OF YOU. I'LL DO MY BEST TO HELP.

THEY PROBABLY ENJOYED THE SHOW.

OUR FRIENDS OUT THERE HAVE GOTTEN QUIET.

I'M SORRY THEY WOULDN'T TAKE YOU. YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GIRL.
THANK YOU. AT LEAST I'LL DIE WITH MY OWN.
YOU MIGHT WANT THIS, MA'AM. IT'S ALL WE CAN SPARE.
MAYBE, BUT RIGHT NOW WE'RE STUCK IN THIS ONE WITH--
MAYBE SOMEDAY, AFTER THE WAR, NONE OF THAT WILL MATTER. NOT RACE, NOT RELIGION, NOT ANYTHING. IT'LL BE A BETTER WORLD.
WITH SLANT EYES.
SHIT!!!

NO, KILL THEM ALL! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK YOU SAW! IF YOU DID SHE'S A SLANT-EYED YELLOW RAT LIKE THE REST! NOW FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS!!

THEY'VE GOT BAZOOKAS!

LOOK OUT!

I'M AFRAID SO, MISS HEYA. ALL THE SAME, I'M GLAD YOU JOINED US. IT SAYS A LOT ABOUT YOU, AND IT MAKES THE END EASIER--

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US ALL LIKE YOU SAID, AREN'T THEY?

YOU FUCKIN' SONS OF--

SAITO! MISS HEYA!!

... BI ... BI ...

... AFTER ... WE GET ... TO THE ... THE ... OTHER SIDE ... MAY I ... BUY YOU ... A DRINK ... ?

... BEFORE ... I GO ... CAN I ... ASK YOU ... A QUESTION ... MISS REYA?

... OH, MR. SAITO ...

... THANKS ... I ALWAYS ... WANTED ... TO HAVE ... A DRINK ... WITH A ... BEAUTIFUL ... GIRL ... ...

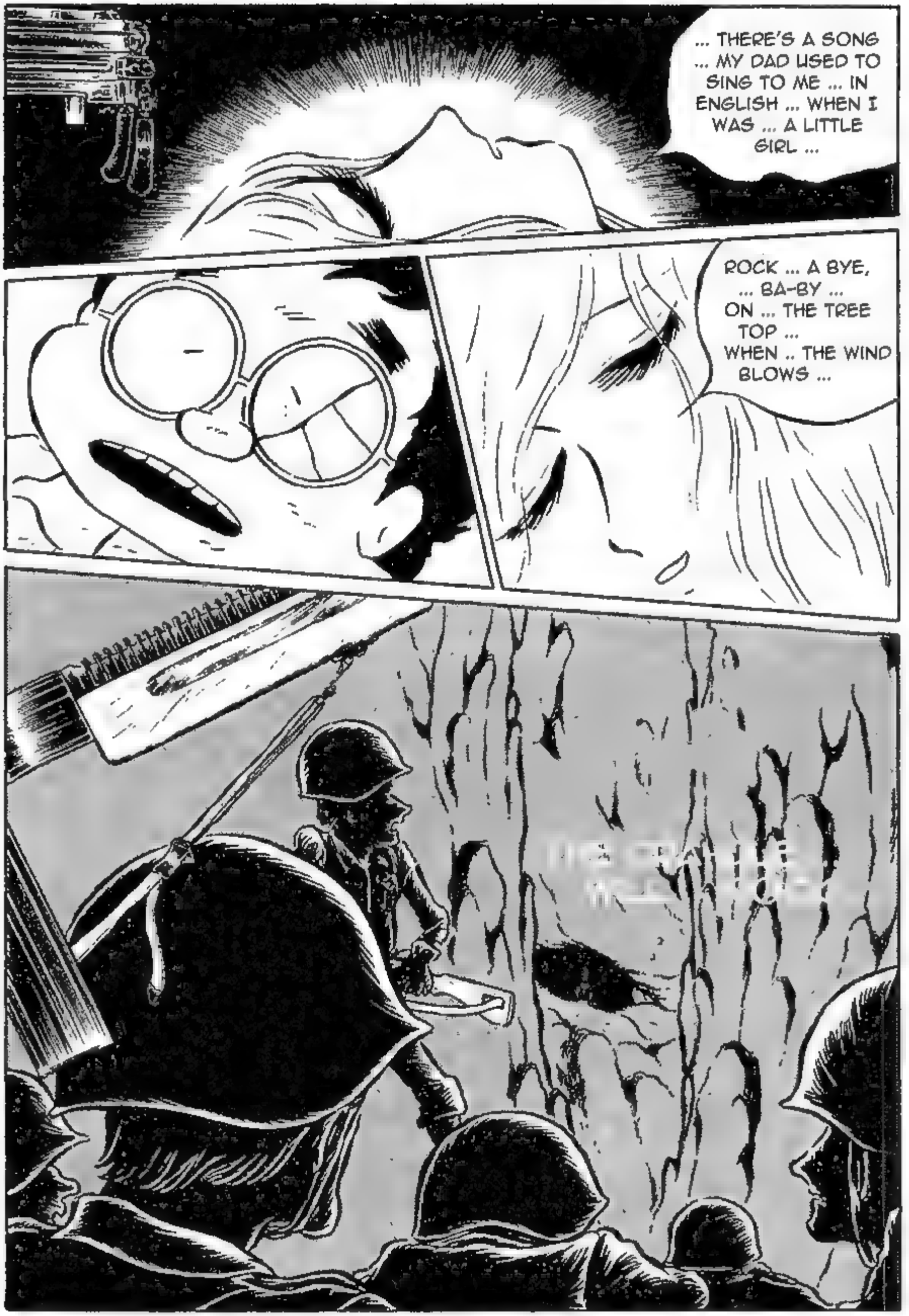
ANYTIME ... MR. SAITO ... THIS SIDE ... OR THAT ...

AHHH ....

THANK YOU.

GOODNIGHT ... SWEET PRINCE ... AND FLIGHTS OF ANGELS ... SING THEE TO REST ....*

NOTE - THE QUOTE FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET* IS MY OWN ADDITION. YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY WHEN YOU TURN THE PAGE. IT ALSO LETS YOU KNOW THAT REIKO HAYA WAS EDUCATED.






NOTE - THIS IS NOT THE SONG FEATURED IN THE ORIGINAL MANGA. I CHOSE IT PARTLY FOR MY ENGLISH SPEAKING AUDIENCE AND PARTLY FOR REASONS THAT WILL BECOME CLEAR SHORTLY. (R.M.)

FWOOOMM!!!
YAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!....
REMEMBER THAT'S NO WHITE WOMAN THAT'S SINGING! TORCH THE LOT!! TORCH EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!!!

LATER ...

ONLY THREE? AND A WOMAN?

LOOK AT THE WAY THAT GUN SHINES EVEN AFTER IT FELL DOWN HERE.

IT'S IN GREAT SHAPE. I'LL BET IF YOU STRAIGHTENED THE BARREL BACK--

ALL WASTED EFFORT IF YOU ASK ME. THEY'RE ALL DEAD AND THIS AIN'T GONNA SHOOT NO MORE.

YOU THINK OUR GUNS WILL SHINE THAT BRIGHT AFTER WE'RE GONE?

SO WHERE'S THIS COMPANY THAT'S BEEN HOLDING THIS GORGE ALL THIS TIME?

THERE WERE ONLY THREE PLUS A WOMAN. DON'T WORRY. WE SENT THEM ALL TO JOIN THEIR ANCESTORS.

AND DOWN WILL COME BABY, CRADLE AND ALL.

RUMBLE!!

RUMBLE!!

IT'S RAIN.

THE RAIN WASHED ALL THE BLOOD AND ASHES AWAY. THE DROPS CONTINUED TO FALL FROM THE END OF THE BARREL.
SOME SAID IT WAS CRYING FOR ALL THE FOOLS THAT HAD FOUGHT IN THAT LONELY PLACE.

EVEN IF THE FLESH IS DESTROYED
THE SOUL WILL SURVIVE.
IT IS A BELIEF SHARED BY ALMOST
EVERY MAJOR RELIGION IN THE WORLD.
THERE ARE EVEN THOSE WHO BELIEVE
THAT THE SOUL CAN BE REBORN AGAIN
SOMEWHERE, SOMEWAY, AND
ON SOME FUTURE DAY.

ALONE AND FORLORN SOMEWHERE ON A
FORGOTTEN BATTLE SITE IN NEW GUINEA,
A LONE RUSTY JAPANESE TYPE 92
HEAVY MACHINE GUN SITS CRYING.
THE AMERICANS WHO WON ON THAT DAY
DIDN'T CARE FOR WHOM IT CRIED
OR THAT IT CRIED FOR BOTH SIDES.

THOSE AMERICAN SOLDIERS HAVE
SINCE GROWN OLD, AND A FEW
REMEMBERED IT IN THEIR DOTAGE.
ONLY NOW DO THEY REMEMBER ITS TEARS.
ONLY NOW DO THEY CONSIDER
WHY IT WAS CRYING,
AND WHY NOW THEY ALSO CRY TOO.

<Published in Weekly Shonen Sunday, Issue 28, 1971>

**INDEPENDENT MACHINE GUN UNIT**

ENDE

# MANDELISMS

Welcome all of you to what is for both you and me going to be an incredible trip. The late Leiji Matsumoto is probably best known for his "Leijiverse" of space opera tales and such, and yet to his dying day he always considered the long-running manga series best known by the titles of *The Cockpit* and *Battlefield (Senjou)* as his best work. That said only four of the tales in this military manga series are known by most here in the West - well, four-and-a-half technically - and the rest you keep hearing about but can never find in any kind of English language version. Since nobody else seems to want to tackle this for whatever reasons I've decided to do so myself. Unfortunately I can't speak or read Japanese so I'm already starting at a big disadvantage. That said I have two resources available that almost offset that. First, I have all of the *Cockpit/Battlefield* manga series that were ever released in printed anthology form, as well as the three sequel anthology series: *Hard Metal*, *Case Hard*, and *Cockpit Legends*. I also have Google Translate AI at my disposal ... and it can handle scanned manga pages, or "scanlate" as I believe it is called. The results are far from perfect but it's enough for me to pick out the gist of each story, and then I use my own skills as a writer to considerably clean up the results for my intended English speaking audience. It is not a perfect process by any means and I will freely admit to both interpolating and being freely creative whenever the "scanlation" fails me. In all cases when this happens and I want to make this clear I try to do my best to keep what I wind up having to do in sync with what I can discern of the story as written. Thus while you're not getting a perfect translation by any measure and there's probably stuff I've missed or the AI "scanlation" botched, at least it's (finally) readable. I know many of you will appreciate the effort. As for the rest, all I can say is that if you've got the skills and resouces to do better then by all means do so. I'll probably enjoy your superior efforts along with everyone else.

I think all of you are familiar with the first part of the first story in the first volume of *The Cockpit*. "The Owen Stanley Witch" not only opens *The Cockpit* but its introduction was also used as the opener for the acclaimed Leijiverse anime feature film *Waga Seishun no Arcadia* (*Arcadia of My Youth*), which gives the most familiar form of the origin story of space pirate Captain Harlock. What you might not have known is that the rest of the original manga tale, that of the crew of a crippled Japanese "Betty" bomber trying to duplicate the elder Harlock's crossing of the Owen Stanley Mountains, wound up serving as the basis for the crossing of the Flame Stream Prominence sequence of scenes late in the movie. The last few scenes in the manga original also remind me of the late Dan O'Bannon's famous "B-17" short in the classic Western animated *Heavy Metal* feature film. Once you've read it you'll know from where I'm coming.

"Pilot Hunter," the second story in this collection, is a disturbing tale and one that was deliberately crafted to be so. It's a study in contrasts, that of the honorable Japanese Army pilot who only kills when he has to and never glories in it with the dishonorable Japanese Army solder who, finding himself alone and abandoned begins waging a one man war and becomes so obsessed with his chosen calling over time that once we finally encounter him (via the pilot) he has become an out-and-out sadist in his "sport." I know many of you got as nauseated as did I and the pilot to see this guy at work and taking great delight not only in his "professional" approach but also with his trophy case. 'Nuff said there. This is the first but not the last time that Matsumoto will illustrate for us the cruelties of wartime sadism. It is something for which more than a few members of the Japanese military became know in the real war, and Matsumoto does not shy away from it in his fiction. That's one of the things that sets *The Cockpit* apart from other wartime Japanese manga. Matsumoto may have to preach to his crowd and have the Japanese either win or come out at least looking good almost every time - doesn't most common war fiction do this everywhere regardless of country or culture? - but at the same time he's not afraid to call a spade a spade whenever he puts one in his plot deck.

"Stratospheric Fighter" is a tale I know a lot of Westerners will have trouble with, as it presents a frank view of the American firebombing of Tokyo and its environs from the Japanese perspective as well as the mostly futile efforts by the Japanese to stop it. A lot has been said about this by historians, scholars, and others more qualified to talk about than I so that's all I'm going to say about it.

"'88' at Point Blank Range" is set in a part of the world during the war that you rarely hear about, and that is Burma. That said and if you know your wartime history keeping the Burma Road open was vital to that theater of war, both to the British when they had it and to the Japanese once they seized control of it. Those of you who are fans of wartime fiction might remember *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, which is set in the same general area but takes place about a year before Matsumoto's tale, when the Japanese are still very much in control there. A year has since passed and what is left of Japanese forces are slowly retreating before superior British forces supplied with plenty of Lend-Lease American gear. Hence the M4 Sherman tank that figures so prominetly in the story. Matsumoto does his typical thing of making a piece of significant military hardware play an important part in his tale, and that is from where the title of this story comes.

The fifth and final tale in this collection, "Independent Machine Gun Unit," would be easy to pass off as just another stereotypical "small band of heroic men holding out against all odds and all comers" kind of war story were it not for the monkey wrench Matsumoto throws in over halfway through with the character of Reiko Haya, the half-breed volunteer nurse. She's the first flesh-and-blood woman you're going to meet in *The Cockpit*, and unfortunately like many of them she winds up dead by tale's end. In Reiko's case she isn't given any choice in the matter, with her blond hair betraying her American father but her "yellow skin and slant eyes" automatically branding her as Japanese to most of the Americans. I'm reminded of the plight of the Nissei here in the States during the war (I live only a few miles from the former Ft. Chaffee). Even in Japan the question of the *haifu* as they were called there was a touchy one, and I for one am glad Matsumoto wasn't afraid to bring it up. Her inevitable death along with the regular Japanese solders in this tale is made even more sad in the final order by the U.S Marine commander, and I'm paraphrasing: "There's no white woman over there! Torch them all!!!" I think that order says it all right there.

Well, that's the end of Volume 1 of the original manga series of *The Cockpit (Battlefield)*. I hope you Leijiverse fans found it as compelling as did I. As for the rest of you, I hope you appoached it with an open mind. I'm reminded of a grizzled old former Marine groundpounder friend of mine who served in Korea and has helped before with some of my books and other projects. Once I told him about this one he wanted nothing to do it. "The Japanese don't deserve to win, not even in stories," he said and then said some things I won't repeat out of respect for the rest of you. Believe it or not I can understand his viewpoint but I don't agree with it. As I said before, your side almost always wins in you own country or culture's military fiction, and when they don't there's usually some redeeming or honorable deus ex machina in there.
That's why, and I say this again, you often have to "read between the lines" with Matsumoto. He's got a lot to say about war and what it does to people but he's not always open about it. He doesn't preach to you. Instead, he lets his tales unfold and lets them slowly but surely educate you in what he's trying to say. That's the way almost all of the serious installments in *The Cockpit* are written. I hope you'll stick around for the rest. As for me, I'm glad and I hope you are too that this particular ball is finally rolling. May it continue to roll until the job is done.

Richard Evan Mandel
13 April 2026.

the owen stanley witch Battlefield Manga Series ①

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